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MARVEL'S GREATEST HEROES REIMAGINED!

In 1996, the hottest creators of the day – including **Jim Lee**, **Rob Liefeld** and **Whilce Portacio** – teamed up to reimagine and reinvigorate Marvel mainstays such as Captain America, Thor, Iron Man, the Avengers and the Fantastic Four. Seemingly killed off in the mainline Marvel Universe, the House of Ideas' most popular heroes were reborn with bold new looks on a brave new world, their origins re-envisioned with a raw vitality and contemporary sensibility.

Iron Man left two lives behind when he vanished, but can he avoid his former mistakes in his new one? The armored Avenger takes on Hydra, Heralds and the Hulk – and the eyes of the Marvel Universe are upon him in the form of Loki, the Watcher and Onslaught himself! Featuring Doc Samson and – or rather, *as* – the Abomination! Plus: Rebel O'Reilly, later of *Thunderbolts* fame!

Collecting ***Iron Man (1996) #1-12*** – written by **Jim Lee, Scott Lobdell, Jeph Loeb** and **Ed Benes**; and illustrated by **Whilce Portacio, Ryan Benjamin, Terry Shoemaker** and **Mike Miller**.

MARVEL

A

MARVEL

HEROES REBORN

IRON MAN

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Stan Lee PRESENTS:
THE ORIGIN OF THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN!
HEART of the MATTER
SCOTT LOBDELL & JIM LEE Story
WHILCE PORTACIO Pencils
SCOTT WILLIAMS & JD Inks
JOE CHIODO & MARTIN JIMENEZ Colors
WILDSTORM EFFECTS Computer Colors
RICH& DAVE @ COMICRAFT Letters
MIKE HEISLER Editor
BOB HARRAS Chief
LET'S TRY THIS AGAIN.
FROM THE TOP!
THEN.

-- AM I GOING TO SEVERELY CUT INTO MY OXYGEN SUPPLY IF I START YAWNING?
CUTE, REBEL... BUT THIS IS A TEST RUN OF THE PROMETHEUS ARMOR.
MAYBE YOU COULD PAY A LITTLE LESS ATTENTION TO YOUR COMEDY...
... AND A LITTLE MORE TO THE SUIT'S E.M. LEVELS.
IS THERE A PROBLEM, GENTLEMEN?
NOT WITH YOUR DESIGN, SIR.
AND NOT WITH REBEL'S PERFORMANCE, PER SE...
BUT..?
BUT THERE'S... SOMETHING... DISCONCERTING ABOUT THESE E.M. SURGES WHICH COINCIDE WITH ANY ENERGY SPIKES.

"SPIKES"? YOU MEAN LIKE CAPTURING BOTH WARHEADS IN THE SUIT'S TRACTOR BEAMS AT ONCE?
PLEASE, I COULD DO THIS IN MY SLEEP BY --
BRRZZZAKKT
...
REBEL?!
Uh-oh --
REBEL -- YOU'RE PUSHING THE ARMOR PAST ITS SAFEGUARDS!
ABORT THE TEST RUN, NOW!
ABORT! ABORT!
BASE -- ALL THE ONBOARD SYSTEMS ARE TRIGGERING AT ONCE!
ABORT, MAN--ABORT, NOW!
TOO LATE.

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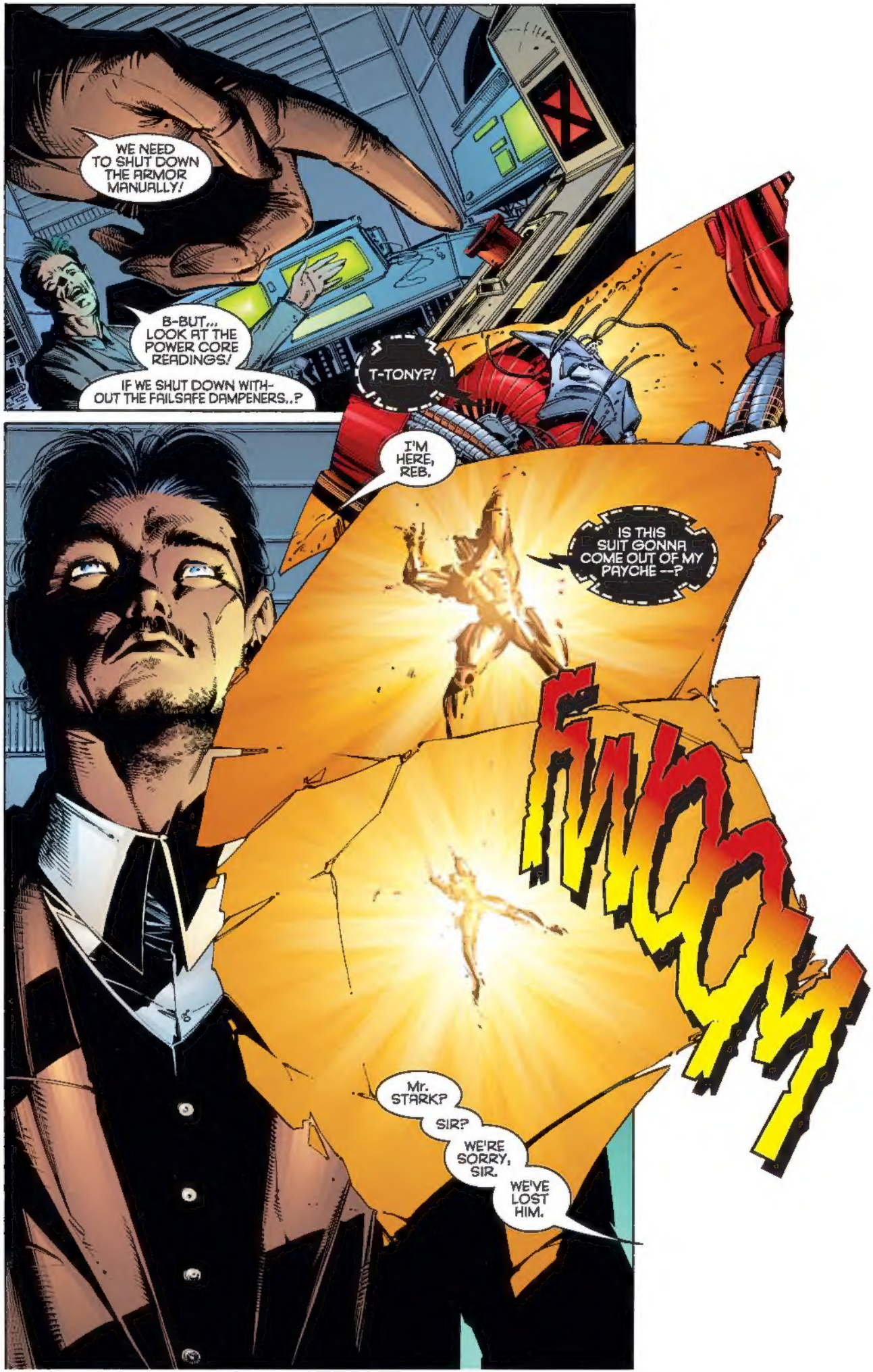
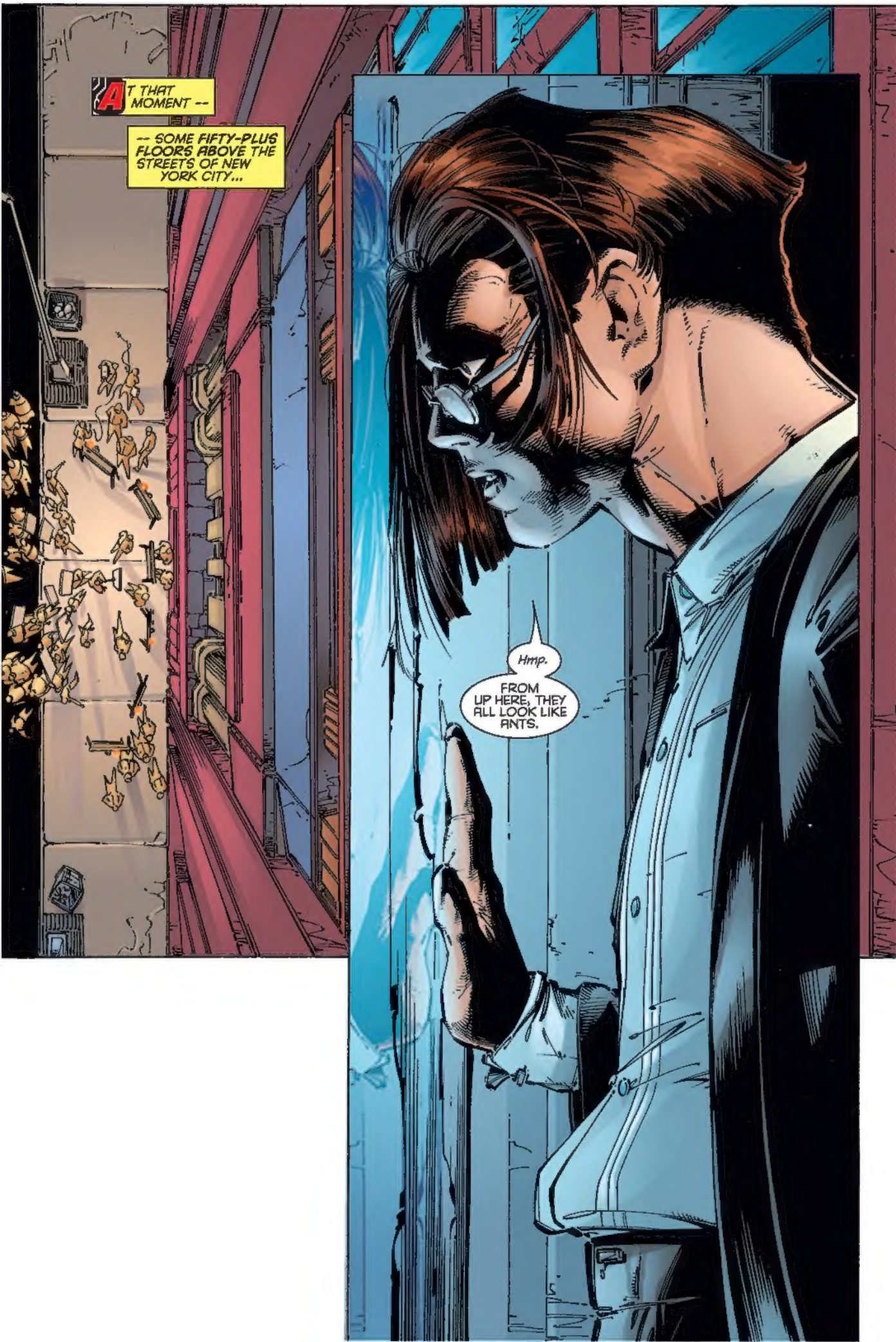

WE NEED TO SHUT DOWN THE ARMOR MANUALLY!
B-BUT... LOOK AT THE POWER CORE READINGS!
IF WE SHUT DOWN WITHOUT THE FAILSAFE DAMPENERS..?
T-TONY?!
I'M HERE, REB.
IS THIS SUIT GONNA COME OUT OF MY PAYCHE --?
FWOOM
Mr. STARK?
SIR?
WE'RE SORRY, SIR.
WE'VE LOST HIM.

NOW,
ACQUITTED
TO THE SURPRISE OF VIRTUALLY NO ONE, ONLY HOURS AGO...
... THE WELL-KNOWN PLAYBOY-BILLIONAIRE-DEFENDANT WAS ACQUITTED IN THE CLASS ACTION SUIT OF THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK VS. ANTHONY STARK.
PROTESTS LIKE THIS ONE OUTSIDE STARK'S MANHATTAN RESIDENCE ARE TAKING PLACE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY --
-- AS MEMBERS OF THE WORKING CLASS ARE VOICING THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT OVER WHAT THEY SEE AS JUST ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF JUNK JUSTICE.
STARK INTERNATIONAL UPSTATE FACILITY.
BUFFALO, NEW YORK.
GUESS WE OWE YOU AN APOLOGY, BRAYDON.
YER THE ONLY ONE WHAT DIDN'T AGREE THE BOSS WAS GUILTY.
SHUT UP, JACK.
GUILTY AS SIN.
I WISH THEY WOULD HAVE FRIED HIM.
SURE, I GUESS WE'D ALL BE OUT OF A JOB, BUT STILL --
HE WAS CHARGED WITH CORPORATE ESPIONAGE AND INSIDER TRADING.
BUT THE PROSECUTION'S CASE WAS OVERWHELMED BY STARK'S LEGAL TEAM.
YEAH, RIGHT
ONLY POOR PEOPLE GO TO JAIL.
WHEN MONEY TALKS, THE GUILTY WALK.
THAT IS WHAT YOU GET FOR PUTTING YOUR FAITH IN THE SO-CALLED "LAWS" OF MAN!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, BRAYDON?

I'M TALKING ABOUT POWER!
I'M TALKING ABOUT REVOLUTION!
I'M TALKING ABOUT PEOPLE OF THIS PLANET TAKING CONTROL OVER THEIR LIVES --
-- INSTEAD OF LETTING THE GOVERNMENTS, AND THE MILITARIES AND THE CORPORATIONS CRUSH THE SPIRIT OF FREE THINKING MEN AND WOMEN EVERYWHERE!
I'M TALKING ABOUT THE STRENGTH THAT COMES WITH A SOLIDARITY OF PURPOSE!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
A THOUSAND THOUSAND ARMS WORKING IN UNISON...
... KNOWING THAT FOR EACH ARM SEVERED IN DEFENSE OF OUR GOAL --
-- TWO MORE WILL TAKE ITS PLACE!
KLIK KLIK
KLIK KLIK
BEEP
BROTHER?
SIGHT SECURED.
PROCEED WITH OP: GAMMA.
ACKNOWLEDGED.
HAIL HYDRA.
HAIL HYDRA.


AT THAT MOMENT --
-- SOME FIFTY-PLUS FLOORS ABOVE THE STREETS OF NEW YORK CITY...
Hmp.
FROM UP HERE, THEY ALL LOOK LIKE ANTS.

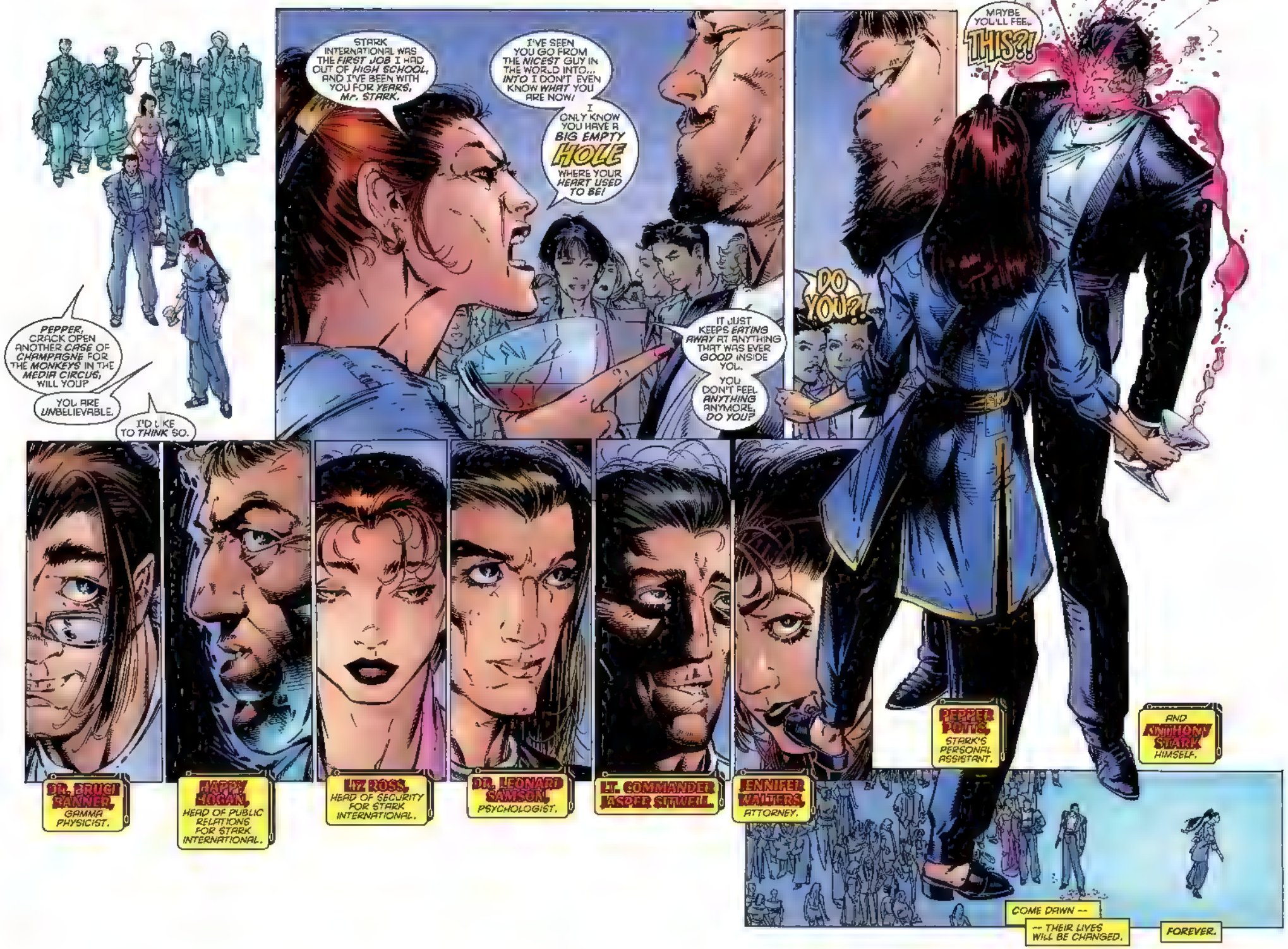
DON'T *KID* YOURSELF, *BRUCE.*
TONY?
THEY *ARE* ANTS.
DAY IN AND DAY *OUT*, THEY STRIVE AND STRUGGLE AND SCURRY ABOUT... AND FOR *WHAT?*
FOR *US.* THEY'RE THE *WORK FORCE.* THEY'RE THE ONES WHO TAKE *THEIR* MONEY AND PLACE IT IN *OUR* WALLETS.
"*OUR*" MEANING *MINE,* OF COURSE.
THEY *HATE* ME FOR IT.
THEY *HATE* ME, AND I *TOLERATE* THEM.
BUT THE *TRUTH* IS, WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT EACH OTHER.
CHEEZE *AND* LOUISE, BOSS -- *KEEP* IT *DOWN.*
THAT'S *EXACTLY* THE KIND O' TALK THAT MAKES *MY* JOB AS *YOUR* PUBLICIST SUCH A PAIN!
AND *THAT'S* THE ONLY REASON I PAY YOU AS *MUCH* AS I DO, *HAPPY.*
BESIDES, *Mr. HOGAN...* I'M AMONG FRIENDS HERE.
AREN'T I?

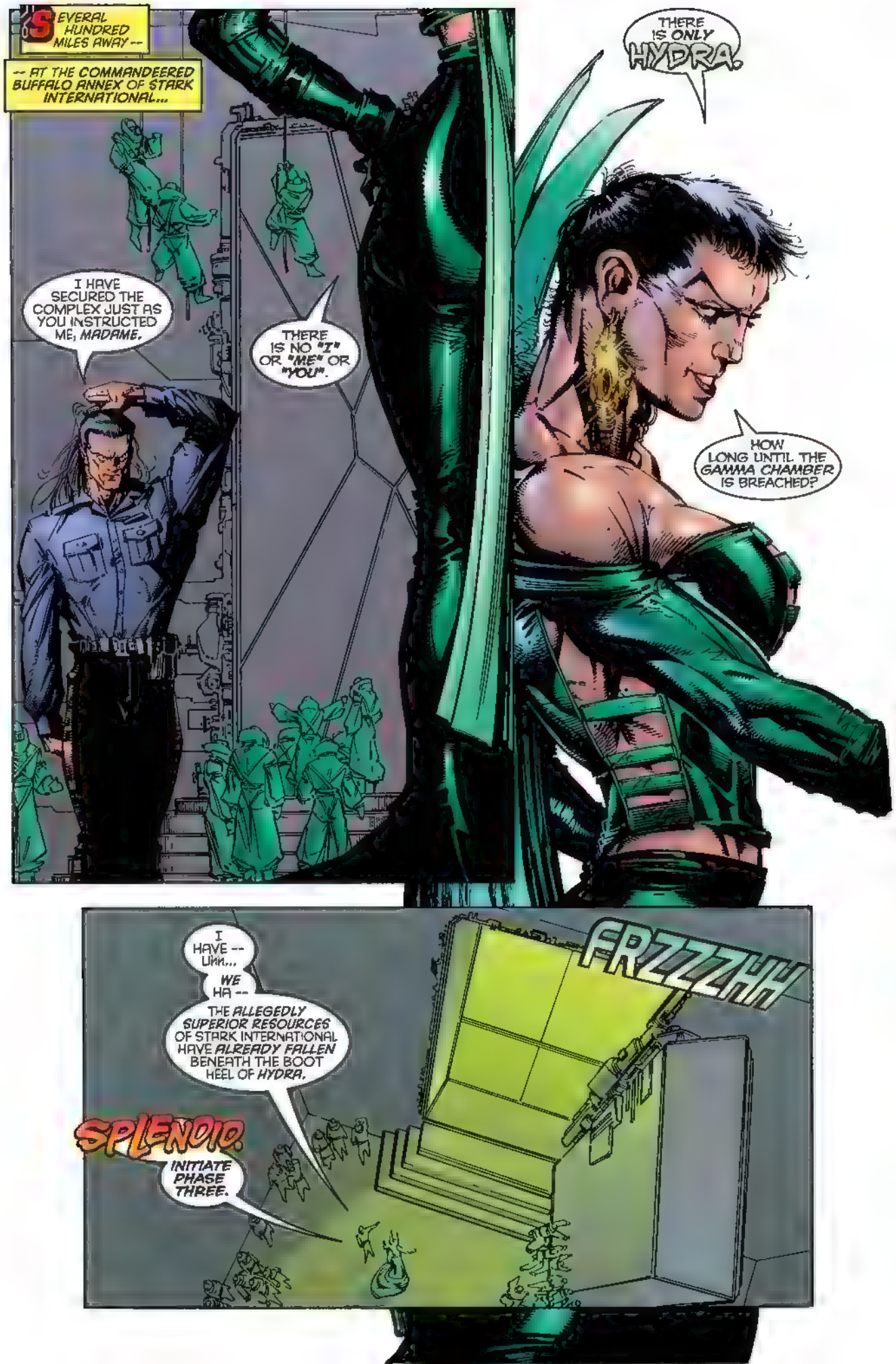
HERE IN YOUR INNER SANCTUM, TONY?
SURE.
YEAH, BOSS.
EVEN ON YER BEST DAYS...
...YER NOT EXACTLY Mr. SENSITIVE.
MAYBE...
Shhhh...
WHAT ABOUT YOU, Dr. BANNER?
WHERE DO YOU BARELY WEIGH IN ON ALL OF THIS?
OTHERWISE, I'D HAVE TO GIVE UP MY GOLD-EMBOSSED BUSINESS CARD THAT READS "LIZ ROSS -- HEAD OF SECURITY AT STARK INTERNATIONAL."
BUT I HAVE TO AGREE WITH THE FLAK.
THERE ARE A LOT OF ANGRY PEOPLE OUT THERE.
MAYBE NOW ISN'T EXACTLY THE BEST TIME FOR A VICTORY CELEBRATION.
Um... WELL, YOU'RE NOT GUILTY, RIGHT?
SO...
...I MEAN, I GUESS...
...GO.
PARDON ME, BRUCE?
I THINK YOU SHOULD GO.
WHEN HAVE YOU EVER CARED ABOUT WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK?
EXACTLY.
COME, HAPPY.
THE MASSES AWAIT.
TRAITOR!

RRRRR
THERE GOES THE MOST INFURIATING, CHARMING, SUPREMELY CONFIDENT, CHARISMATIC, CONTRADICTORY, ICE-COLD MAN I'VE EVER MET!
GO EASY ON HIM, LIZ.
HE WASN'T ALWAYS... THAT WAY.
THERE WAS THE TIME THE FIVE OF US HAD CAMELOT ALL PLANNED OUT.
WE WERE GOING TO BE THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE...
... FORGING THE FUTURE WITH OUR MINDS.
ME.
REED.
VICTOR.
REBEL.
AND TONY?
TONY STARK'S ARMOR SHINED THE BRIGHTEST.
SO WHAT HAPPENED, BRUCE?
LIFE, LIZ.
LIFE HAPPENED.

Mr. STARK?
TONY?
TONY?
ONE AT A TIME, PLEASE.
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD... ? I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
SO, LEONARD... WHAT IS YOUR PROFESSIONAL OPINION ON STARK'S BEHAVIOR?
A BIT "COCKY", NO?
SORRY, Mr. SITWELL, IN LIGHT OF DOCTOR-PATIENT PRIVILEGE --
-- I'M NOT AT LIBERTY TO DISCUSS HIS STATE OF MIND.
THAT DIDN'T STOP YOU FROM TESTIFYING ON THE STAND THOUGH, DID IT, DOCTOR?
I BELIEVE THE BUZZ WORD WAS: "CHRONIC PERSONALITY DISPLACEMENT."
THERE ARE LEGAL PUNDITS WHO ARGUE IT WAS YOUR TESTIMONY ALONE THAT KEPT STARK'S ENTIRE EMPIRE FROM SINKING LIKE A STONE.
YEAH, HE BOUGHT COMPANIES AND SOLD THEM OFF PIECE BY PIECE... BROKE PROMISES... BROKE LAWS. WELCOME TO AMERICA, HUH?
I... ACCEPT MY PART IN IT ALL, JASPER.
THAT'S SOMETHING I'M GOING TO HAVE TO LIVE WITH FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

... AND WHILE I CAN UNDERSTAND THEIR ANGER AND FRUSTRATION OVER THE LOSS OF THEIR LIVELIHOOD --
-- THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM OF OUR COUNTRY RULED THAT I DIDN'T ACT WITH MALICE AFORETHOUGHT WITH INTENT WHEN I PURCHASED THE NEW YORK CONSORTIUM OF BUSINESSES.
OF COURSE, THOUGH MY INNOCENCE WAS CLEAR FROM THE BEGINNING...
... IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN LONGER TO WIN WITHOUT MY ATTORNEY, Ms. JENNIFER WALTERS.
AT LEAST SHE HAS ENOUGH SELF-RESPECT TO LOOK EMBARRASSED.
NOW PLEASE... ENJOY THE PARTY.
IT'S ON THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.
OUCH.


PEPPER, CRACK OPEN ANOTHER CASE OF CHAMPAGNE FOR THE MONKEYS IN THE MEDIA CIRCUS, WILL YOU?
YOU ARE UNBELIEVABLE.
I'D LIKE TO THINK SO.
STARK INTERNATIONAL WAS THE FIRST JOB I HAD OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL, AND I'VE BEEN WITH YOU FOR YEARS, MR. STARK.
I'VE SEEN YOU GO FROM THE NICEST GUY IN THE WORLD INTO... INTO I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU ARE NOW!
I ONLY KNOW YOU HAVE A BIG EMPTY HOLE WHERE YOUR HEART USED TO BE!
IT JUST KEEPS EATING AWAY AT ANYTHING THAT WAS EVER GOOD INSIDE YOU.
YOU DON'T FEEL ANYTHING ANYMORE, DO YOU?
MAYBE YOU'LL FEEL THIS?!
DO YOU?!
DR. BRUCE BANNER, GAMMA PHYSICIST.
HAPPY HOGAN, HEAD OF PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR STARK INTERNATIONAL.
LIZ ROSS, HEAD OF SECURITY FOR STARK INTERNATIONAL.
DR. LEONARD SAMSON, PSYCHOLOGIST.
LT. COMMANDER JASPER SITWELL.
JENNIFER WALTERS, ATTORNEY.
PEPPER POTTS, STARK'S PERSONAL ASSISTANT.
AND ANTHONY STARK HIMSELF.
COME DAWN --
-- THEIR LIVES WILL BE CHANGED.
FOREVER.


SEVERAL HUNDRED MILES AWAY --
-- AT THE COMMANDEERED BUFFALO ANNEX OF STARK INTERNATIONAL...
I HAVE SECURED THE COMPLEX JUST AS YOU INSTRUCTED ME, MADAME.
THERE IS NO "I" OR "ME" OR "YOU".
THERE IS ONLY HYDRA.
HOW LONG UNTIL THE GAMMA CHAMBER IS BREACHED?
I HAVE -- UHH...
WE HA --
THE ALLEGEDLY SUPERIOR RESOURCES OF STARK INTERNATIONAL HAVE ALREADY FALLEN BENEATH THE BOOT HEEL OF HYDRA.
FRZZZHH
SPLENDID.
INITIATE PHASE THREE.

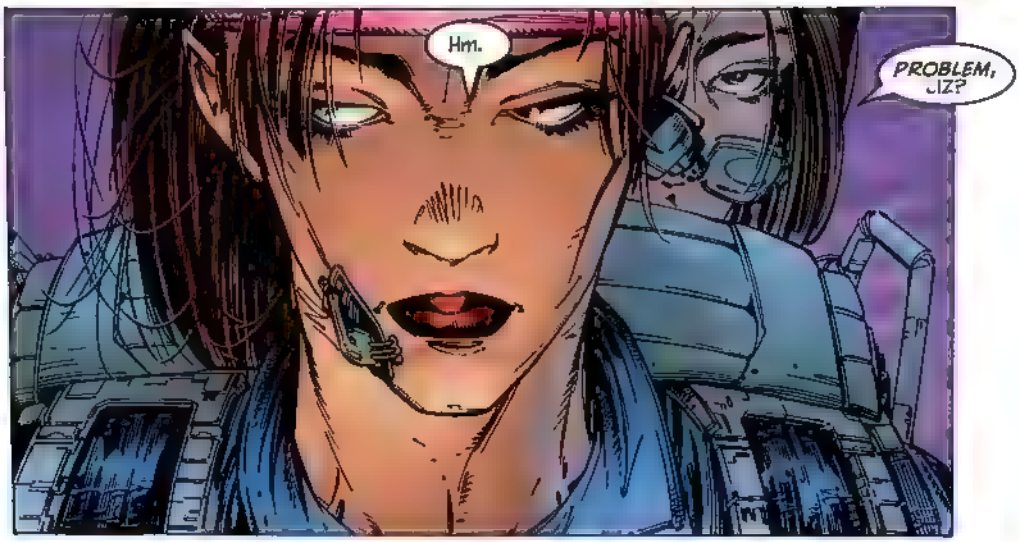
LIZ.
THAT LITTLE... WITCH!
LIZ.
THAT PENCIL-PUSHING GEEK!
LIZ.
SHE KNOWS THE KIND OF PRESSURE HE'S BEEN UNDER LATELY!
WHERE DOES SHE GET OFF --
LIZ, FRIEND TO FRIEND? YOU'RE OVERREACTING.
TONY'S A BIG GUY. HE CAN TAKE A DRINK IN THE FACE.
IT'S... A SECURITY MATTER, BRUCE.
FUNNY, TO ME IT LOOKS LIKE A WOMAN IN --
BIPBIPBIP
WHA --? AN OPCENT ALERT.
BRUCE. IT'S... THE BUFFALO ANNEX.
DEAR GOD.
NO ONE KNOWS WHAT'S UP THERE.
COULD IT BE A MISTAKE?
ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.
IT'S MY PROJECT, LIZ.
I'M GOING WITH YOU.
WHAT'S THE MATTER, JASPER?
MAYBE NOTHING.
MAYBE EVERYTHING.

FEEL BETTER?
WORSE.
MUCH.
PLEASE, Mr. STARK.
TELL ME YOU TALK TO SOMEBODY.
ABOUT?
ABOUT WHATEVER IT IS THAT HAPPENED TO YOU THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING.
IT'S LIKE YOU TRAPPED YOURSELF INTO TH S EMOTIONAL ARMOR AND THREW AWAY THE KEY.
I CAME OUT HERE, PEPPER, SO THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN US.
I WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU REALIZE YOU'RE FIRED.
...
GOOD-BYE, Mr. STARK.
AND GOOD LUCK.

THAT STRUCK ME AS *UNNECESSARILY CRUEL*, ANTHONY.
I PUT UP WITH YOU AND YOUR *NEW AGE PSYCHOBABBLE* FOR AS LONG IT COULD HELP ME *WIN* MY CASE, LEONARD.
LET'S NOT *CONFUSE* THE ISSUE BY HAVING YOU SUDDENLY THINK YOUR OPINION ACTUALLY *MEANS* ANYTHING TO ME, *EH?*
OTHERWISE, YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF STANDING BEHIND POTTS ON THE *UNEMPLOYMENT* LINE.
WHAT *THEN*, ANTHONY?
YOU GET RID OF PEPPER. AND ME. THEN *ANYONE* WHOSE OPINIONS YOU CAN'T *BUY* OR BULLY?
THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ANTHONY STARK... OR *NOTHING* AT ALL?
FOR A MAN WHO MADE A *CAREER* AS A BRILLIANT *INVENTOR* -- SOMEONE WHO BUILT THINGS *UP* FROM *NOTHING*...
... YOU SPEND AN *INORDINATE* AMOUNT OF TIME AND ENERGY *TEARING* THINGS *DOWN*.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO *ANSWER* ME, ANTHONY -- I DOUBT YOU *COULD* IF YOU WANTED TO...
... BUT *SOMEDAY* YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO ANSWER WHY *YOU* STARTED TAKING THINGS *APART* --
-- INSTEAD OF *PUTTING* THINGS *TOGETHER*?

HERE'S A QUESTION FOR YOU, DOCTOR.
IS TONY STARK A MAN WHO IS ON TOP OF THE WORLD...
...OR SIMPLY A MAN ON THE EDGE?
ONLY YOU HAVE THE ANSWER TO THAT ONE, ANTHONY.
BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS --
-- KEEP PUSHING AWAY THE PEOPLE WHO TRULY CARE FOR YOU... AND BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THEY STILL EXIST --
-- AND WHETHER YOU FALL FROM THE EDGE, OR FROM THE TOP OF THE WORLD --
-- THERE'LL BE NOBODY LEFT TO HELP PICK UP THE PIECES.

SOON...
COMMANDER ROSS TO TOWER.
TOWER HERE, COMMANDER.
STARK SECURITY I-COPTER CLEARED FOR LANDING.

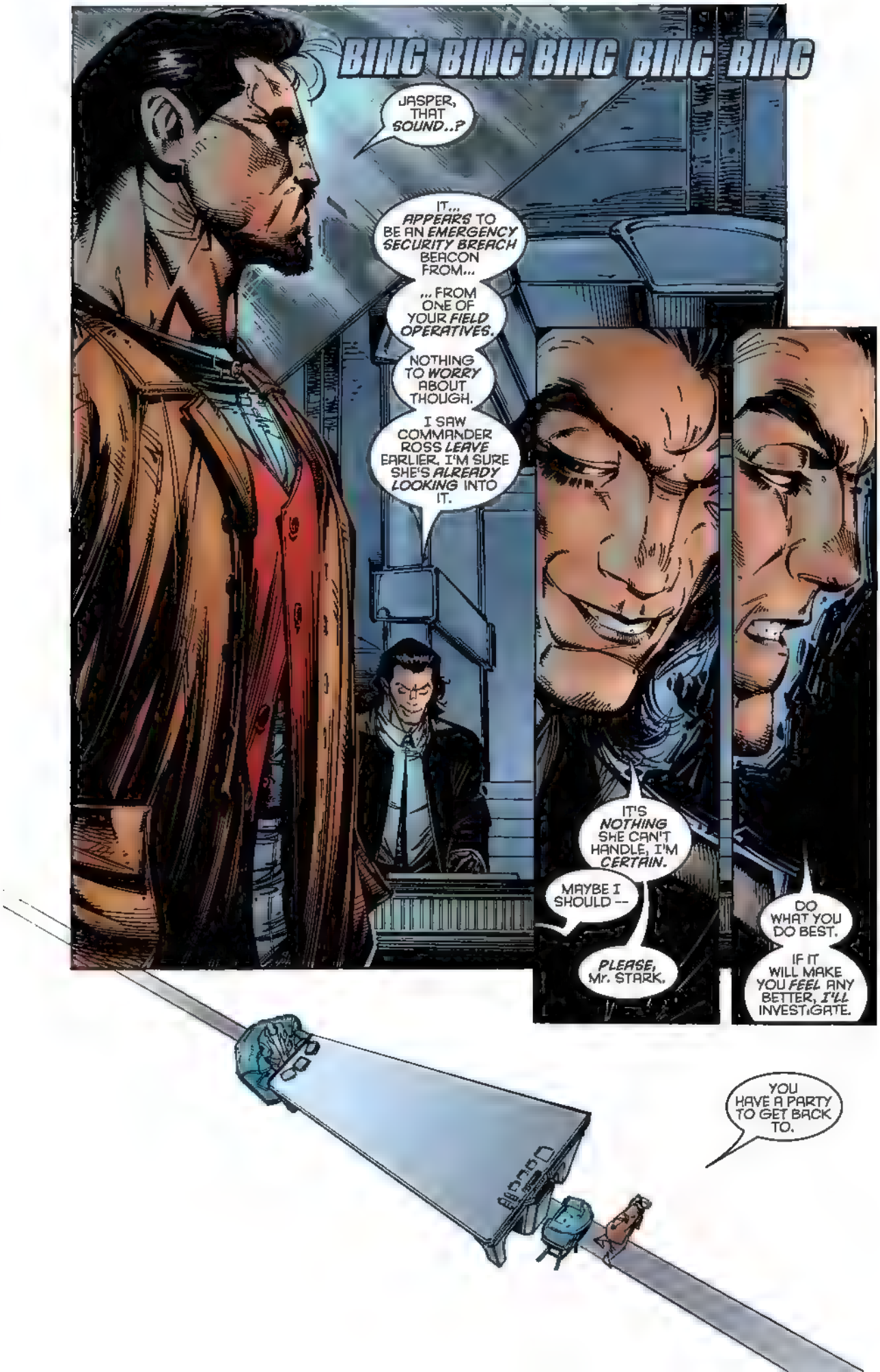

Hm.
PROBLEM, JIZ?

SOMETHING'S... WRONG.
STRAP YOURSELF DOWN, BRUCE --
-- WE'RE GOING IN!

LIZ, WHU-- ?!
FBOOM
FBOOM
FBOOM FBOOM
DOCKING PROCEDURES ARE STRICTLY ENFORCED, BRUCE!
SECURITY CRAFTS ARE NEVER IDENTIFIED BY NAME --
-- AND NOBODY IN THE TOWER SO MUCH AS BLINKED WHEN I HAILED THEM.
THAT CAN ONLY MEAN THE PLACE HAS BEEN COMMANDEERED!
BUT LIZ, WHAT IF YOU'RE WRONG?!
DIE -- DIE IN THE NAME OF HYDRA!
FBING FBINGFBING
SIMPLE, BRUCE.
I'M NEVER WRONG.

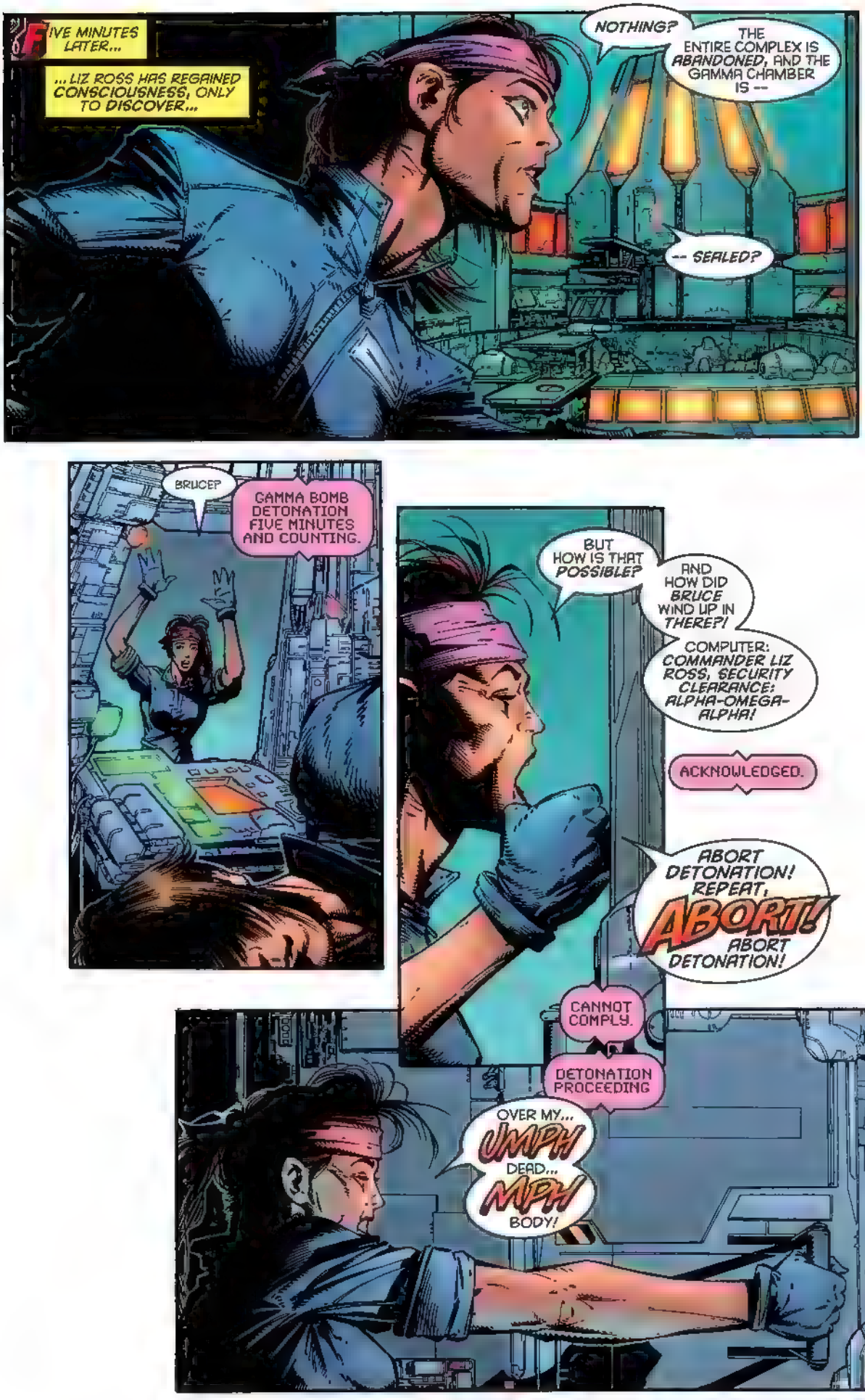
HAIL HYDRA!!
YEAH, YEAH, YEAH...
...HAIL THIS.
BARRA
BOOM
LIZ, THERE'S SOMEONE STILL ALIVE...
...STEPPING THROUGH THE WRECKAGE!
HER.
BRUCE, CALL FOR BACK-UP.
I CAN'T.
?!
WONK

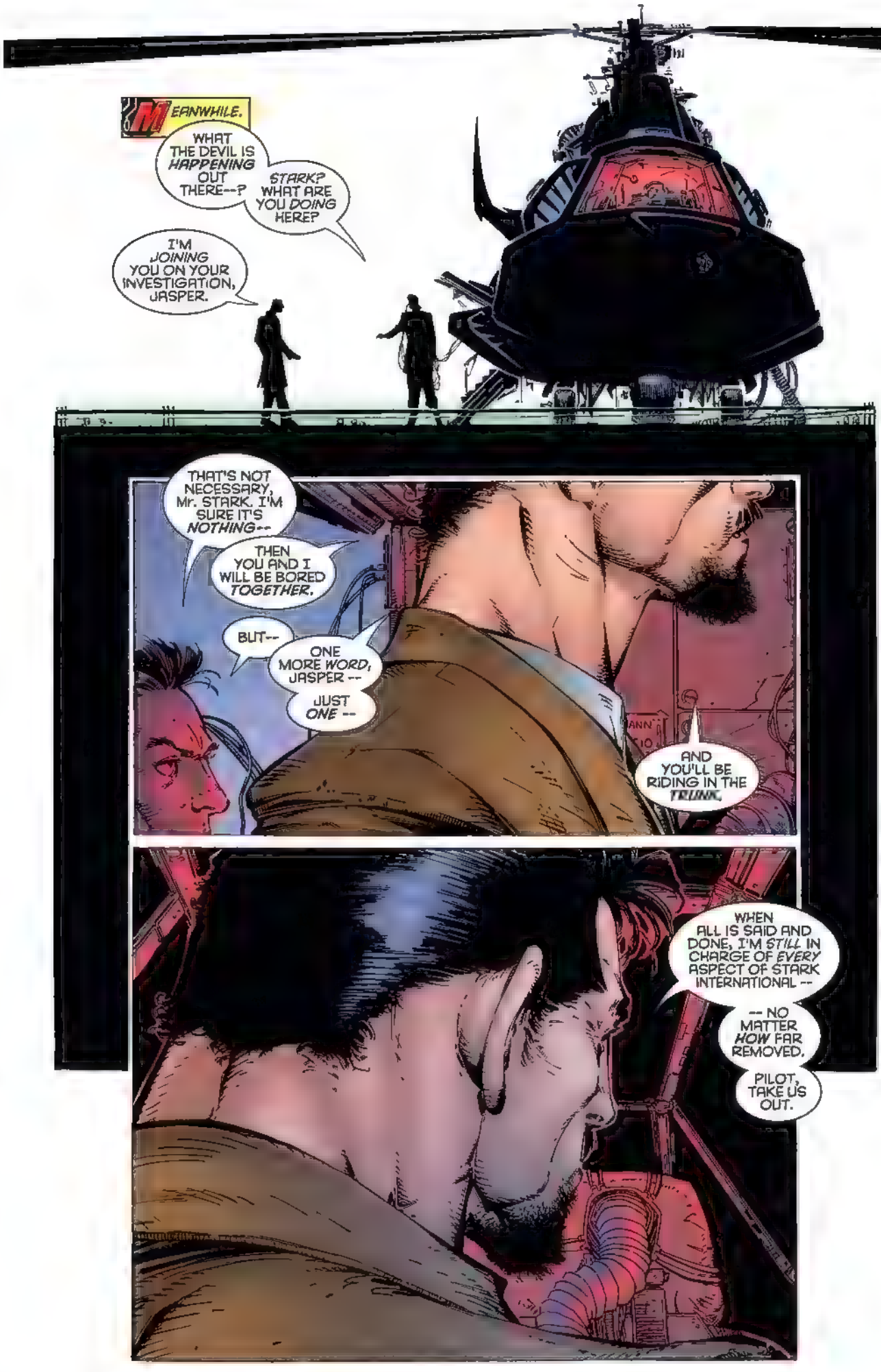
ELSEWHERE...
... IN A DARKENED BOARDROOM IN STARK'S MANHATTAN COMPLEX...
YOU'RE MISSING YOUR PARTY, STARK... SITTING HERE ALONE IN THE DARK.
TELL ME, JASPER, THE TRUTH.
AM I REALLY THAT BAD A PERSON?
YOU'RE A GENIUS.
PEOPLE RARELY UNDERSTAND GENIUS.
MAYBE THAT WAS TRUE AT ONE TIME...
... WHEN I WAS INVENTING MORE THINGS THAN SCIENTIFIC AMERICA COULD KEEP TRACK OF...
... BUT NOT ANY-MORE.
YOU ARE THE HEAD OF THE MOST POWERFUL, MOST PROLIFIC, MOST WIDESPREAD ELECTRONICS CONGLOMERATE IN THE WOR_D, STARK.
THE WORLD.
YOU BUILT A MODERN DAY EMPIRE WITH YOUR OWN TWO HANDS.
DOES THAT CHANGE A PERSON?
YES.
BUT WORDS LIKE "GOOD" OR "BAD"...
... PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND I ARE ABOVE SUCH LABELS.
WE HAVE TO BE IN ORDER TO DO WHAT WE DO.


BING BING BING BING BING
JASPER, THAT SOUND..?
IT... APPEARS TO BE AN EMERGENCY SECURITY BREACH BEACON FROM...
... FROM ONE OF YOUR FIELD OPERATIVES.
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT THOUGH.
I SAW COMMANDER ROSS LEAVE EARLIER. I'M SURE SHE'S ALREADY LOOKING INTO IT.
IT'S NOTHING SHE CAN'T HANDLE, I'M CERTAIN.
MAYBE I SHOULD --
PLEASE, Mr. STARK.
DO WHAT YOU DO BEST.
IF IT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL ANY BETTER, I'LL INVESTIGATE.
YOU HAVE A PARTY TO GET BACK TO.

UPSTATE...
... THE GAMMA CHAMBER.
FEAR.
IT'S A VERY POWERFUL WEAPON, ISN'T IT DOCTOR BANNER?
WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?
BECAUSE ONLY SOMEONE WHO IS SO AFRAID OF THE WORLD --
-- COULD FIND IT WITHIN HIS HEART TO CREATE A WEAPON CAPABLE OF DESTROYING THAT WORLD.
I HAVE... MANY REGRETS... ABOUT HAVING BUILT THE GAMMA BOMB IN THE FIRST PLACE.
IT'S THE ONLY REASON I'M HELPING YOU PEOPLE TO DISMANTLE IT LIKE WE AGREED.
LET US DISPENSE, THEN, WITH THE ANALYSIS --
-- BEFORE THE AUTHORITIES ARRIVE TO STOP US.
OUR JOB HERE IS DONE, DOCTOR BANNER.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU HAVEN'T EVEN REMOVED THE BOMB...
...FROM ITS... SILO?
THERE HAS BEEN A SLIGHT CHANGE OF PLANS.

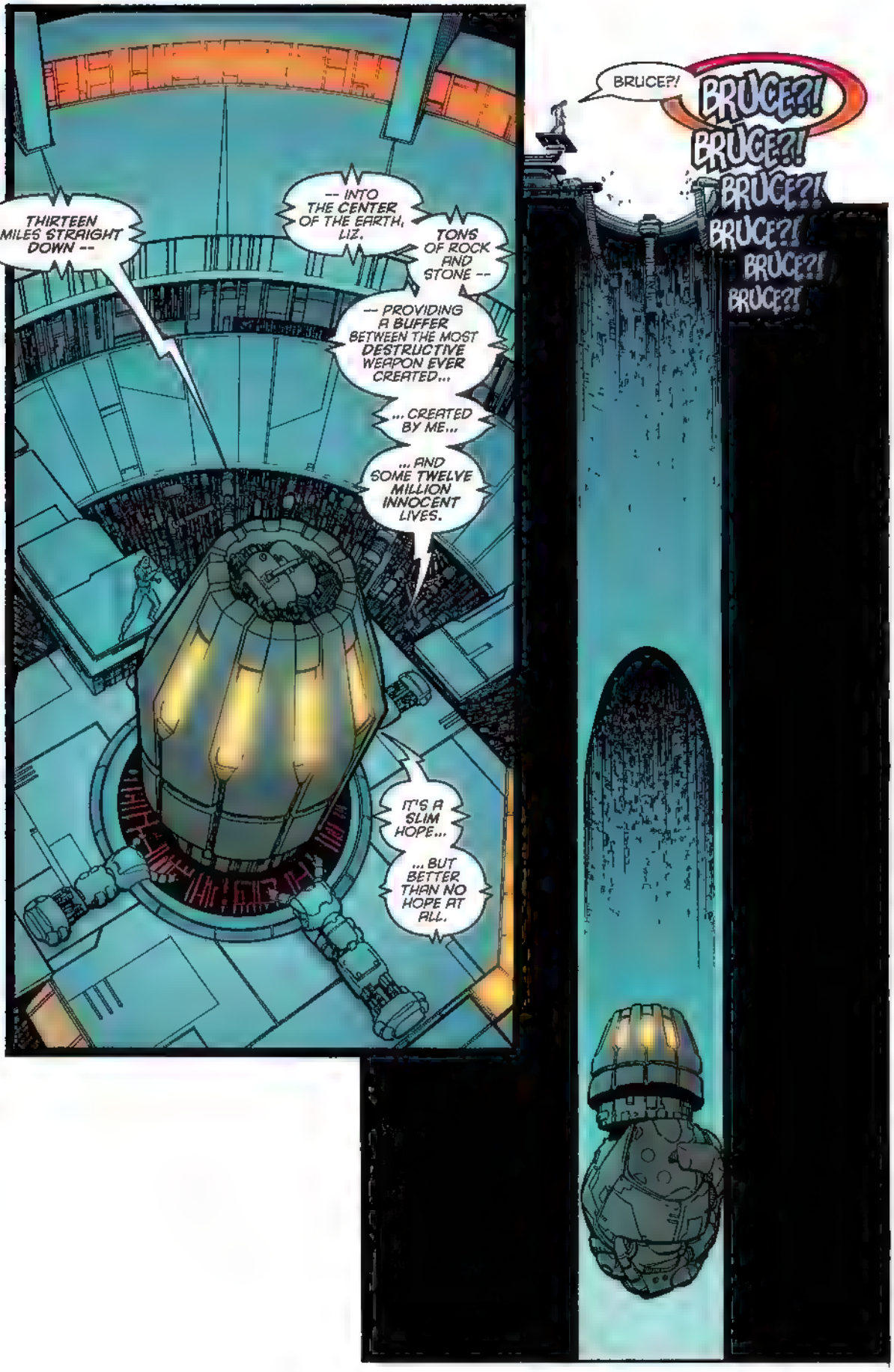
NOT TO WORRY, THOUGH.
WE STILL PLAN ON DESTROYING THE BOMB.
BUT DISASSEMBLING IT WOULD BE SO CUMBERSOME.
INSTEAD, WE'RE GOING TO DETONATE IT RIGHT NOW --
ARE YOU INSANE?!
CAN YOU EVEN BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN IN LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE?!
I'M NOT GOING TO ALLOW YOU TO --
EXACTLY, DOCTOR BANNER.
SPAK
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO ALLOW US TO DO ANYTHING.
BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT FEELING GUILTY FOR YOUR MISGUIDED HELP.
BY THE TIME YOU WAKE UP, YOU --
-- AND HALF THE EASTERN SEABOARD --
-- WILL BE DEAD.


FIVE MINUTES LATER...
...LIZ ROSS HAS REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS, ONLY TO DISCOVER...
NOTHING?
THE ENTIRE COMPLEX IS ABANDONED, AND THE GAMMA CHAMBER IS --
-- SEALED?
BRUCE?
GAMMA BOMB DETONATION FIVE MINUTES AND COUNTING.
BUT HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
AND HOW DID BRUCE WIND UP IN THERE?!
COMPUTER: COMMANDER LIZ ROSS, SECURITY CLEARANCE: ALPHA-OMEGA-ALPHA!
ACKNOWLEDGED.
ABORT DETONATION! REPEAT, ABORT! ABORT DETONATION!
CANNOT COMPLY.
DETONATION PROCEEDING
OVER MY... UMPH DEAD... MPH BODY!


MEANWHILE.
WHAT THE DEVIL IS HAPPENING OUT THERE--?
STARK? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I'M JOINING YOU ON YOUR INVESTIGATION, JASPER.
THAT'S NOT NECESSARY, Mr. STARK. I'M SURE IT'S NOTHING--
THEN YOU AND I WILL BE BORED TOGETHER.
BUT--
ONE MORE WORD, JASPER --
JUST ONE --
AND YOU'LL BE RIDING IN THE TRUNK.
WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, I'M STILL IN CHARGE OF EVERY ASPECT OF STARK INTERNATIONAL --
-- NO MATTER HOW FAR REMOVED.
PILOT, TAKE US OUT.

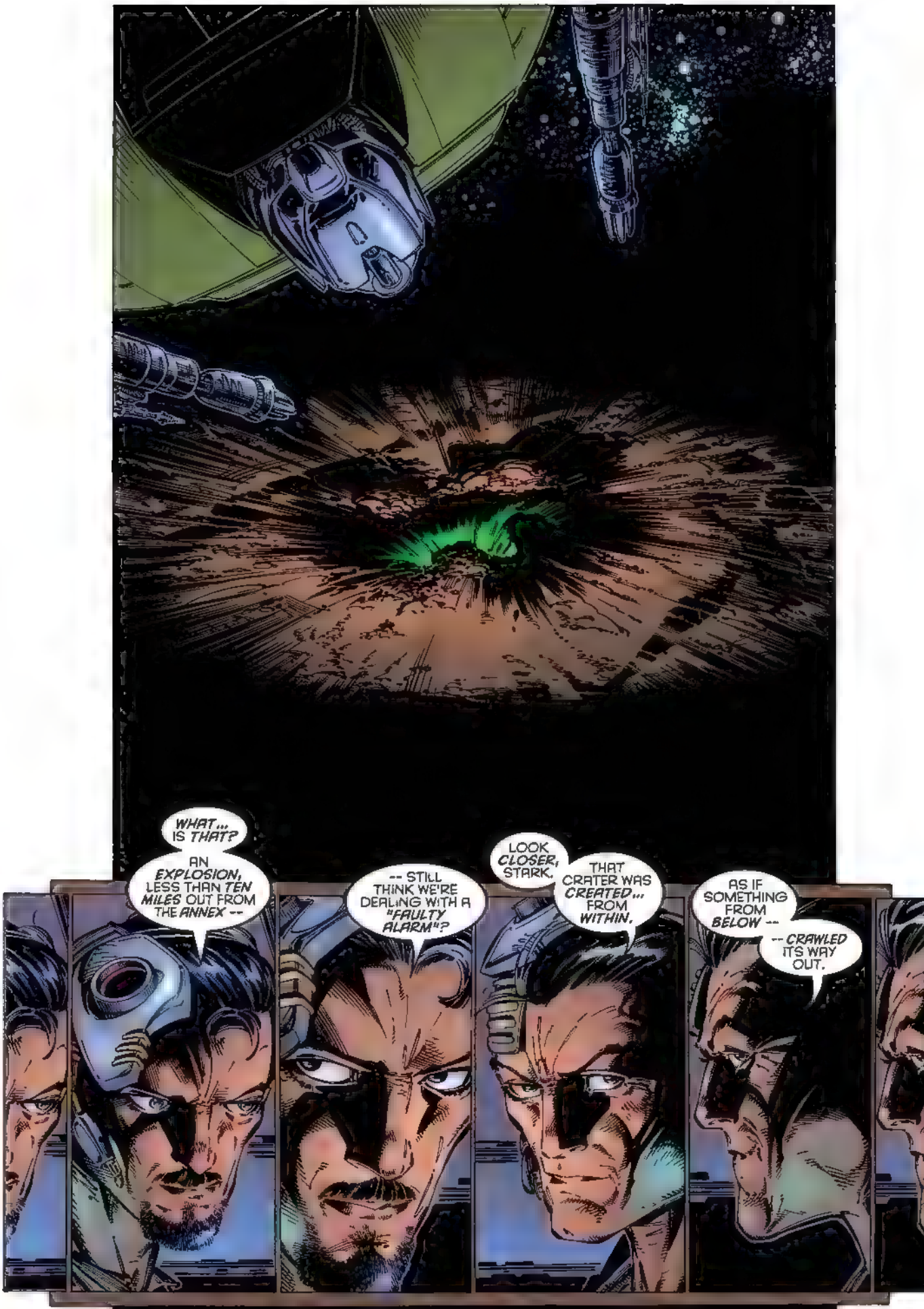
HUMH..?
LIZ..?
CAN'T HEAR HER WITHOUT THE INTERCOM...
KLIK
BRU -- FINALLY!
BRUCE.. LISTEN TO ME:
THE BOMB HAS BEEN ACTIVATED.
YOU HAVE TO LET ME IN THERE.
WE CAN FIGURE OUT A WAY TO DISARM IT.
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, BRUCE -- YOU ONLY CREATED THE THING.
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO TOOK OVER THE COMPLEX THAT ARE RESPONSIBLE.
NO.
THIS IS MY FAULT.
I'LL... FIX IT.
NOW LET ME IN THERE BEFORE IT'S
TOO LATE!

IT'S... ALREADY TOO LATE, LIZ.
THE FAILSAFE..?
THEY DISABLED IT.
BRUCE.
PLEASE... COME OUT.
THE CHAMBER MIGHT CONTAIN THE BLAST.
IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY.
THERE'S ONLY ONE POSSIBLE CHANCE.
AND WE BOTH KNOW WHAT IT IS.
SHUNK
BRUCE -- NOOO!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING..? IT'S SUICIDE!
BRUCE, PLEASE...
DON'T DO THIS!


THIRTEEN MILES STRAIGHT DOWN --
-- INTO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, LIZ.
TONS OF ROCK AND STONE --
-- PROVIDING A BUFFER BETWEEN THE MOST DESTRUCTIVE WEAPON EVER CREATED...
... CREATED BY ME...
... AND SOME TWELVE MILLION INNOCENT LIVES.
IT'S A SLIM HOPE...
... BUT BETTER THAN NO HOPE AT ALL.
BRUCE?!
BRUCE?!
BRUCE?!
BRUCE?!
BRUCE?!
BRUCE?!
BRUCE?!

KLIK
SOMEDAY, LIZ...
... WHEN THE WHOLE STORY COMES OUT...
... MAYBE YOU'LL FORGIVE ME.
PLEASE, GOD --
-- DON'T TAKE HIM.
WHILE THE SILO IS SEALED SHUT BEHIND HIM...
... LIZ ROSS IS THE SOLE WITNESS AS THE MOST BRILLIANT GAMMA PHYSICIST IN THE WORLD --
-- FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES --
-- CEASES TO EXIST.
AS WE KNEW HIM.

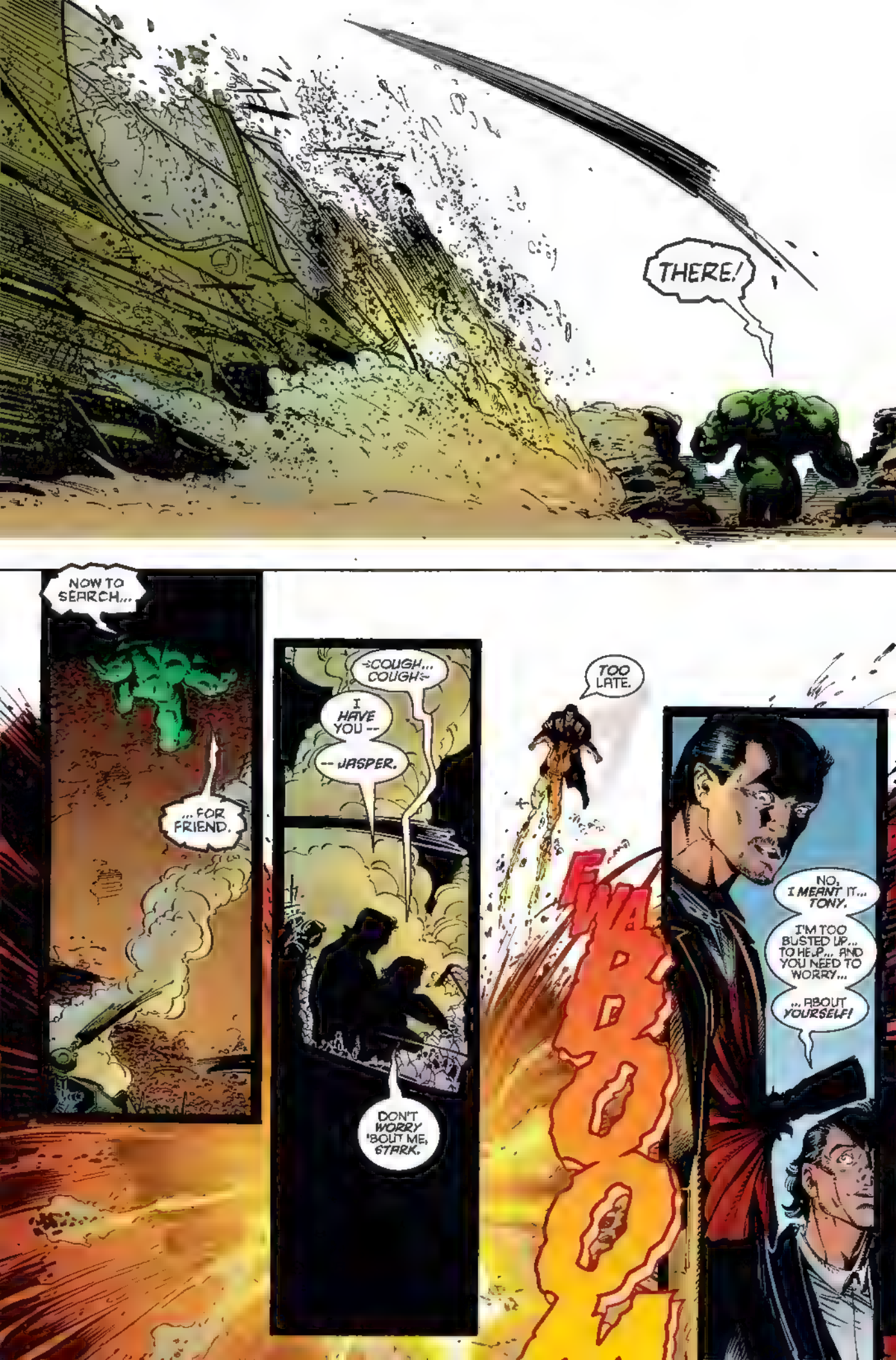
FIFTEEN MINUTES AND TEN MILES LATER...
THERE WAS A TIME, JASPER --
-- WHEN I USED TO THRIVE ON THIS.
THE UNEXPECTED.
THE NEXT DISCOVERY.
FINDING WHAT WAS BROKEN, AND FIXING IT.
I'M AFRAID THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE ALL THAT EXCITING, SIR.
THE BUFFALO ANNEX OF STARK INTERNATIONAL --
-- HAS BEEN RUNNING ON A SKELETON CREW FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS, JUST LIKE YOU ORDERED.
I CAN'T IMAGINE THERE IS ANYTHING THERE OF ANY INTEREST WHATSOEVER.
BUT IF CHECKING OUT A FAULTY ALARM SYSTEM IS WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO TAKE YOUR MIND OFF YOUR RECENT PROBLEMS...
SO BE IT.
SIR?
I THINK YOU SHOULD SEE THIS.


WHAT... IS THAT?
AN EXPLOSION, LESS THAN TEN MILES OUT FROM THE ANNEX --
-- STILL THINK WE'RE DEALING WITH A "FAULTY ALARM"?
LOOK CLOSER, STARK.
THAT CRATER WAS CREATED... FROM WITHIN.
AS IF SOMETHING FROM BELOW --
-- CRAWLED ITS WAY OUT.

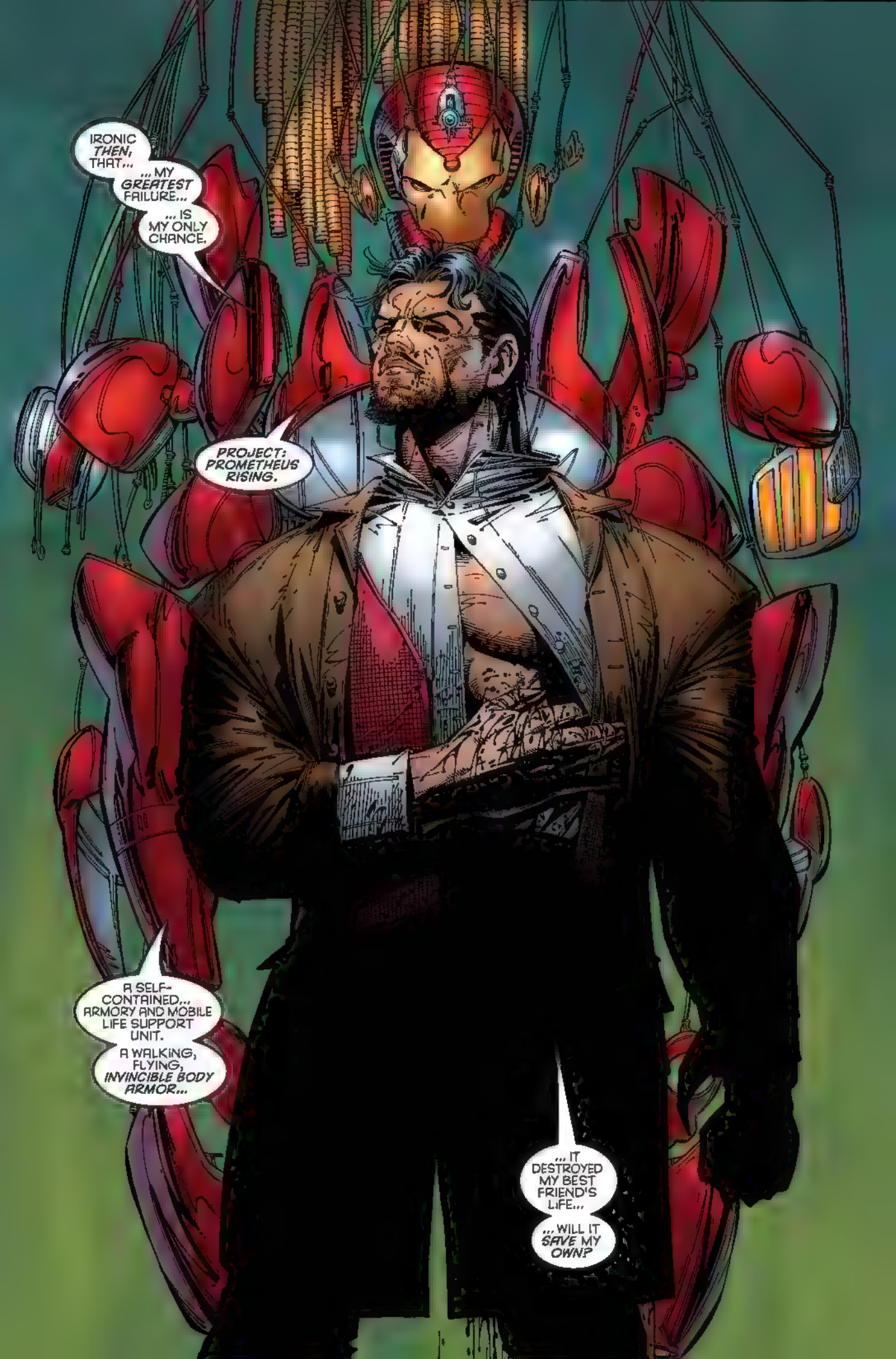
PILOT, KILL THE LIGHTS.
FULL CLOAK.
MAINTAIN RADIO SILENCE.
FIVE MILES TO ANNEX.
THREE MILES.
PERIMETER BREACH!
WE HAVE AN INTRUDER ON THE GROUNDS! I'M GOING TO CALL FOR BACK-UP, STA --
NO.
DON'T.
NOT YET, JASPER.
NOT UNTIL WE KNOW WHAT IT IS WE'RE DEALING WITH.
PILOT, ILLUMINATE OUR... "GUEST."

WHAT IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN..?
I DON'T THINK THAT'S WHERE IT CAME FROM, JASPER.
IT MIGHT NOT BE HUMAN AT ALL.
LOOK AT THE READINGS... THE RADIATION LEVELS ARE SPIKING!
IT'S AS IF... AS IF THAT CREATURE WERE ONE HULKING MASS OF GAMMA ENERGY!
LIGHT... BRIGHT!
GO AWAY!
AWAY FROM ME!

GOOD ADVICE.
PILOT, GET US OUT OF HERE.
NOW.
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THE ROCK THAT THING IS LIFTING!
PULL UP -- PULL UP!
LIGHT WILL NOT LEAVE?
THEN LIGHT WILL BE SMASHED!


THERE!
NOW TO SEARCH...
... FOR FRIEND.
=COUGH... COUGH=
I HAVE YOU --
-- JASPER.
DON'T WORRY 'BOUT ME, STARK.
TOO LATE.
KA-BOOM
NO, I MEANT IT... TONY.
I'M TOO BUSTED UP... TO HELP... AND YOU NEED TO WORRY...
... ABOUT YOURSELF!

MOMENTS LATER.
JASPER'S RIGHT...
...LOSING BLOOD BY...THE QUART.
HATE TO LEAVE HIM THERE...
BUT IF THE SHRAPNEL REACHES MY HEART... I'M A DEAD MAN.
BUT THERE'S...A REASON I SHUT DOWN...THIS PLANT.
EVEN IF IT'S CLEAR... THE PLACE HAS... BEEN ACTIVE FOR A WHILE.
THIS IS WHERE EVERYTHING...
...WENT SOUR... FOR REBEL.
SSKRISSS
IT'S WHERE I TRIED TO BURY...
...MY PAST.


IRONIC *THEN*, THAT...
... MY *GREATEST* FAILURE...
... IS MY ONLY CHANCE.
PROJECT: PROMETHEUS RISING.
A SELF-CONTAINED... ARMORY AND MOBILE LIFE SUPPORT UNIT.
A WALKING, FLYING, *INVINCIBLE BODY ARMOR*...
... IT DESTROYED MY BEST FRIEND'S LIFE...
... WILL IT *SAVE* MY *OWN*?

ELSEWHERE, THE COMPLEX...
LIZ?
NO REASON TO RUN.
YOU ARE SAFE.
SAFE -- WITH FRIEND.
AMAZING.
THAT CREATURE ALMOST SEEMS... ATTRACTED... TO COMMANDER ROSS?
BUT WHAT IS SHE DOING HERE BY HERSELF?
WHAT HAPPENED TO BANNER -- LET ALONE THE GAMMA BOMB?

LET HER GO AND STEP ASIDE.
LIZ IS SAFE! LIZ IS WITH FRIEND!
GO AWAY, IRON MAN!
GO AWAY OR BE SMASHED!
NEXT ISSUE: NEED WE SAY IT..?
IRON MAN VS THE SAVAGE HULK!

THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
MARVEL COMICS
IRON MAN
SEP. '96 2
LOBDELL
LEE
PORTACIO
WILLIAMS/JD
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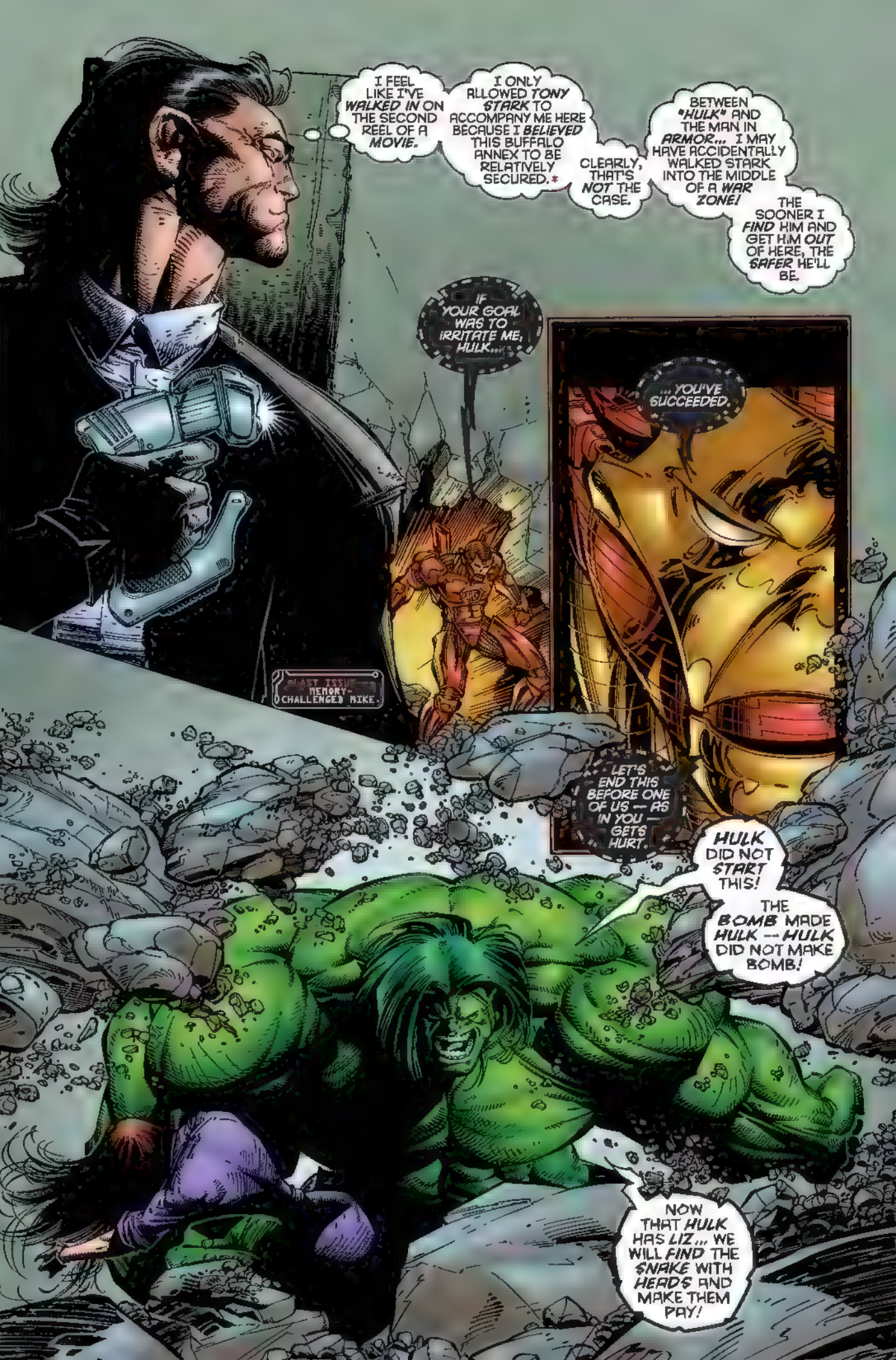
IS THERE A PROBLEM HERE?

BIG PROB..LEM.
YOUR PROBLEM, IRON MAN!
LIZ IS FRIEND.. CAME BACK TO HELP LIZ!
"CAME BACK..?"
DOES THAT MEAN YOU'VE BEEN HERE -- TO STARK INTERNATIONAL -- BEFORE?
I'M SURE I WOULD HAVE REMEMBERED A BIG, GREEN-TINTED, STRAPPING HULK LIKE YOU ON THE PAYROLL..
FOR THAT MATTER, WHERE ARE YOU COMING BACK FROM?
YOU CALLED ME .. HULK?
HULK DOESN'T KNOW WHERE HE COMES FROM!
DOESN'T KNOW WHERE HE'S GOING!
HE ONLY KNOWS HULK GOES WHERE HE WANTS --
-- AND ANYONE WHO GET'S IN HULK'S WAY --
HULK SMASHES!
I'M ALWAYS IMPRESSED BY A MAN WITH A PLAN... ER, HULK.
BUT LIZ ROSS IS HEAD OF SECURITY HERE AT S.I.
IT'S AGAINST COMPANY POLICY TO LET GREAT GREEN GOLIATHS GALLOP OFF WITH EMPLOYEES.
I'M SURE YOU CAN APPRECIATE WHERE I'M COMING FROM ON THIS.
NOW IF YOU'LL JUST PUT HER DOWN AND GO...
... WE CAN CALL IT A NIGHT.

DEAR GOD, LOOK AT THESE READINGS!
THIS... THIS HULK IS A WALKING TOXIC WASTE DUMP OF RADIATION!
GAMMA... RADIATION?
HIGH LEVEL
A RADIATION
SO WHAT DO YOU SAY, PAL?
GOT IT?
HULK IS NOT IRON MAN'S PAL!
HULK SAYS..
...NO!


I FEEL LIKE I'VE WALKED IN ON THE SECOND REEL OF A MOVIE.
I ONLY ALLOWED TONY STARK TO ACCOMPANY ME HERE BECAUSE I BELIEVED THIS BUFFALO ANNEX TO BE RELATIVELY SECURED.*
CLEARLY, THAT'S NOT THE CASE.
BETWEEN "HULK" AND THE MAN IN ARMOR... I MAY HAVE ACCIDENTALLY WALKED STARK INTO THE MIDDLE OF A WAR ZONE!
THE SOONER I FIND HIM AND GET HIM OUT OF HERE, THE SAFER HE'LL BE.
IF YOUR GOAL WAS TO IRRITATE ME, HULK...
... YOU'VE SUCCEEDED.
LAST ISSUE: MEMORY-CHALLENGED MIKE.
LET'S END THIS BEFORE ONE OF US -- AS IN YOU -- GETS HURT.
HULK DID NOT START THIS!
THE BOMB MADE HULK -- HULK DID NOT MAKE BOMB!
NOW THAT HULK HAS LIZ... WE WILL FIND THE SNAKE WITH HEADS AND MAKE THEM PAY!

I HAVE IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY THAT THIS ENTIRE COMPLEX WAS ALL BUT EMPTY UP UNTIL AN HOUR AGO.
THERE WAS NO HULK.
NO BOMB.
AND CERTAINLY NO... "SNAKE WITH HEADS"
BUT WE CAN TALK ABOUT ALL OF THIS AFTER YOU REGAIN CONSCIOUS-NESS.
HA!
YOU ARE GOING TO STOP HULK WITH YOUR HAND?
SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
WHUMP

Stan Lee presents: THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN IN:
HULK SMASH!
SCOTT LOBDELL & JIM LEE STORY
WHILCE PORTACIO PENCILS
SCOTT WILLIAMS & JD INKS
JOE CHIODO & MARTIN JIMENEZ COLORS
WILDSTORM EFFECTS COMPUTER COLORS
RICH & DAVE @ COMICRAFT LETTERS
MIKE HEISLER EDITOR
BOB HARRAS CHIEF
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE LEFT THE PARTY.
ONE MINUTE I'M CELEBRATING MY ACQUITTAL IN NEW YORK CITY AS TONY STARK, BILLIONAIRE --
-- THE NEXT THING I KNOW, I'M HERE UPSTATE, TRAPPED IN THIS PROMETHEUM ARMOR IN ORDER TO KEEP MY HEART BEATING --
-- AND SLUGGING IT OUT WITH THIS... THIS MONSTER.
WHO...
... ARE YOU?

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I AM...
I AM... IRON MAN, MS. ROSS.
I... WORK FOR... MR. STARK.
NOT WITHOUT A SECURITY CLEARANCE, YOU DON'T.
ALPHA-OMEGA-A-ALPHA.
WE'RE... CLOSE.
..?!
ONLY STARK HAS THAT RATING.
APPARENTLY, AT LEAST YOU'RE NOT ONE OF... THEM.
"THEM?"
HYDRA -- THE TERRORISTS WHO RAIDED THIS PLACE.
THE... SNAKE WITH HEADS?
EXACTLY. THEY'RE THE ONES WHO DETONATED THE GAMMA BOMB.
GAMMA... BOMB?
IT WAS THE PROJECT DR. BANNER WAS WORKING ON --
-- HE DIED TRYING TO DISARM IT BEFORE IT EXPLODED.
BRUCE...
...IS DEAD?
THIS IS BAD.
IT TOOK YEARS TO GAIN STARK'S TRUST, SO HE'D GIVE ME COMPLETE RUN OF HIS CORPORATE EMPIRE.
BAD ENOUGH ROSS IS STILL ALIVE. THE LAST THING I NEED IS FOR THIS IRON MAN AROUND TO UPSET THINGS.
PSST.
HUNH?
TAP TAP

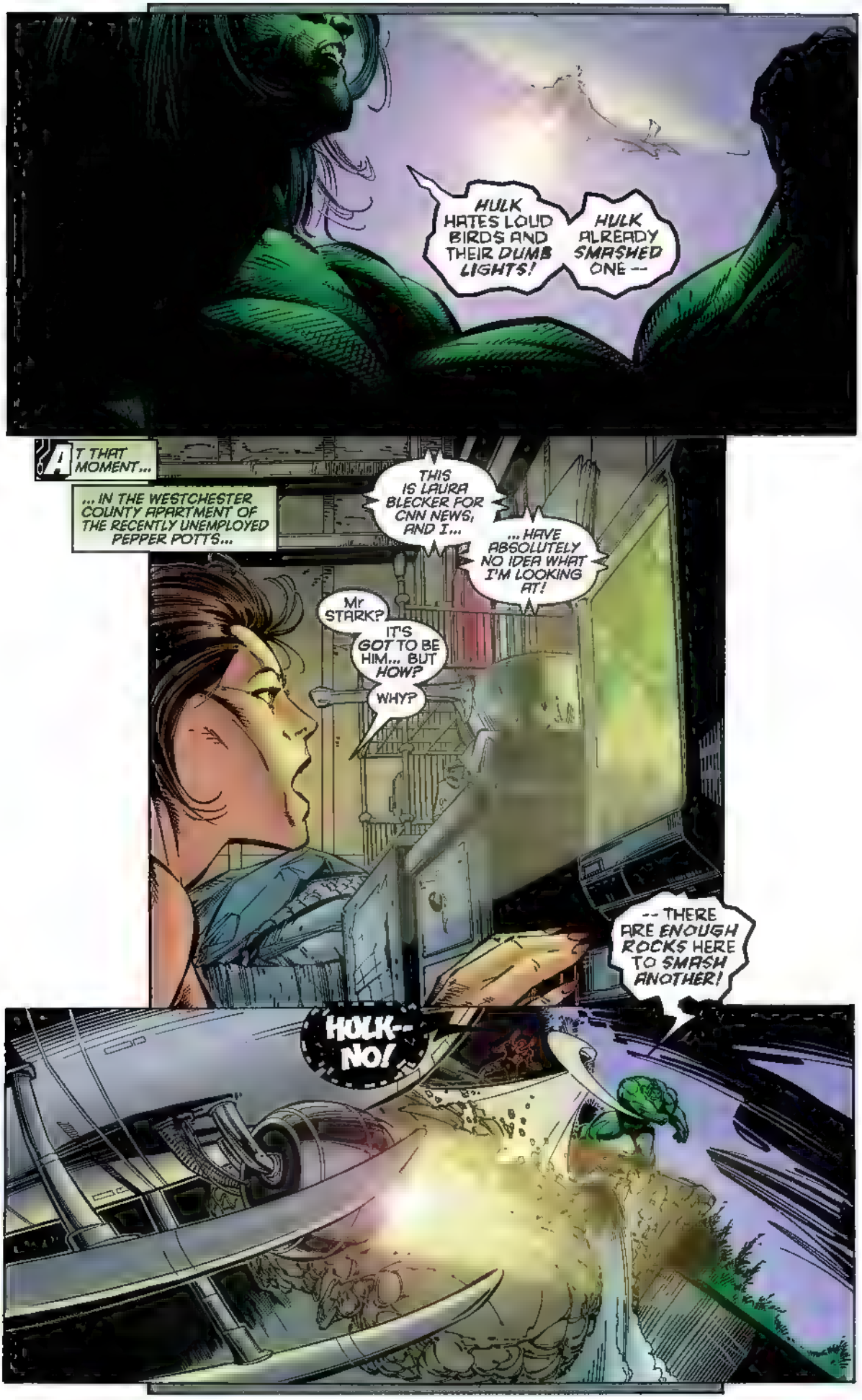
WHAM
HULK HAS MADE UP HIS MIND.
HULK DOESN'T LIKE IRON MAN!
IRON MAN, DO SOMETHING!
DUCKING DOESN'T COUNT?
THIS IS GETTING MORE INTERESTING BY THE MOMENT.
ONLY I DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO SOLVE ANY OF THE MYSTERIES SURROUNDING THOSE TWO.
LAST TIME I SAW STARK, HIS CHEST WAS FULL OF SHRAPNEL...
... AND I WAS TOO BANGED UP FROM THE HELICOPTER CRASH TO HELP HIM.
AS GOVERNMENT LIAISON TO STARK INTERNATIONAL, MY PRIORITY IS FINDING TONY.
EVEN IF IT'S JUST HIS CORPSE.

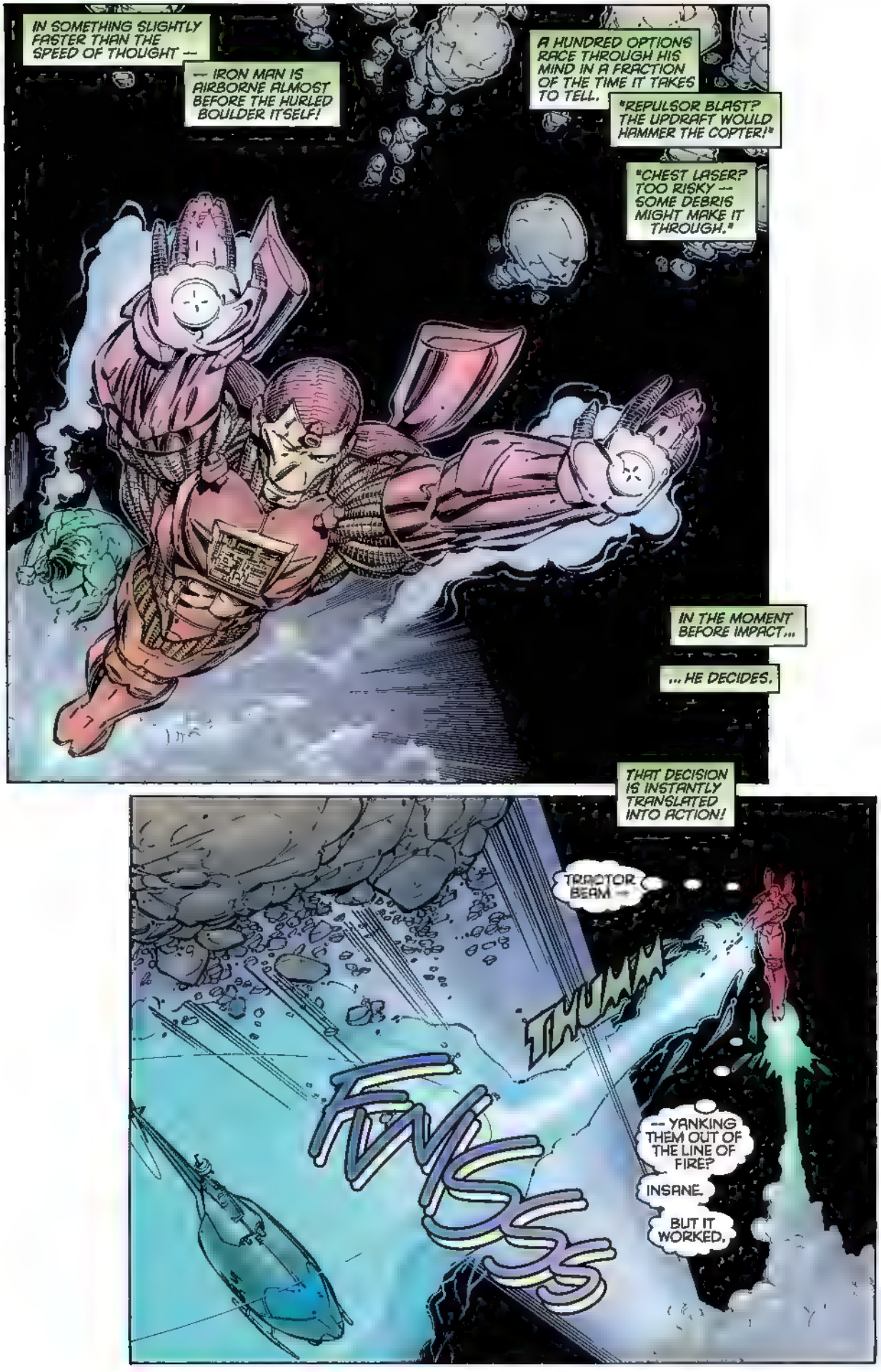
IRON MAN IS SMART TO RUN FROM HULK!
BEING SMART IS ACTUALLY MY SECOND BEST ASSET.
I'M ACTUALLY JUST TRYING TO LURE HIM OUTSIDE THE PLANT --
-- AWAY FROM ROSS AND SITWELL --
-- BUT NO NEED TO TELL HIM THAT.
WHAT IS FIRST THING YOU DO BEST?
THIS!
FUMM
AGAIN WITH THE HAND?
HULK CAN...
... CAN NOT...
... HULK CAN'T MAKE PUNCH LAND ON IRON MAN?
THE FIRST TIME I HIT YOU WITH A HARDCORE REPULSOR BLAST.
THIS... IS JUST... A LOW-GRADE FORCE FIELD.
DON'T DARE PUSH THE ARMOR TOO FAR --
-- NOT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED TO REBEL DURING THE FLIGHT TEST OF THE ORIGINAL PROMETHEUM ARMOR. *
* AGAIN, SEE LAST ISSUE -- SINGLE-MINDED MIKE.

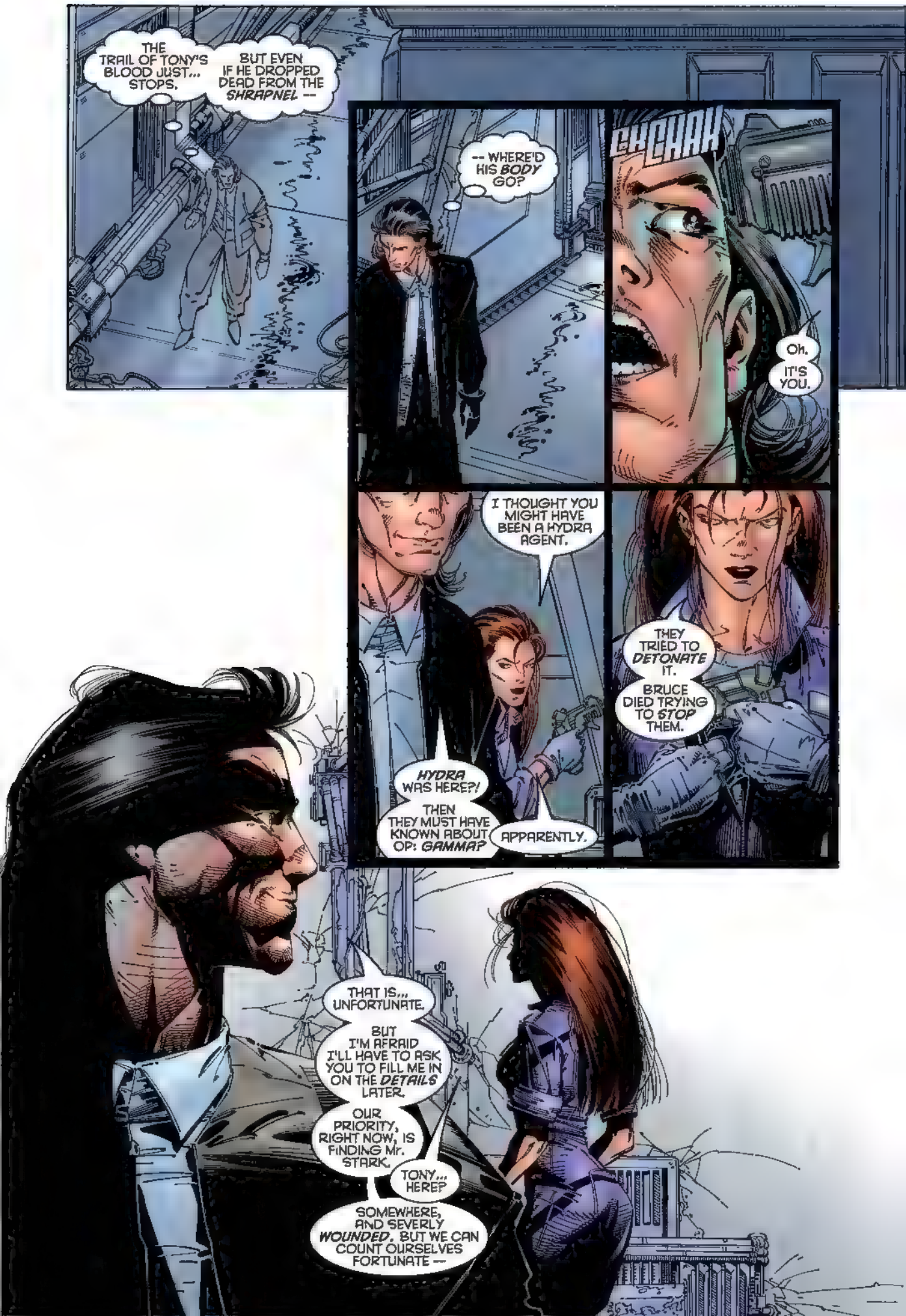
LOW-GRADE, TRUE...
... BUT STRONG ENOUGH...
?!
... TO SEND YOU UP
UP
AND AWAY!
FWOOSH
THREE MILES LATER...
IF HULK GETS HURT --
-- HULK WILL BE MAD!
I'M NOT LOOKING TO HURT YOU, HULK.
UNLESS I LEARN YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH WHATEVER HAPPENED TO A FRIEND OF MINE NAMED BRUCE BANNER!
WUSSH

...BANNER..?!
HULK KNOWS WHO BANNER IS!
HULK HATES BANNER!
ASSUMING I BELIEVE YOU, THAT'S REASSURING.
BUT JUST THIS VERY MOMENT WE'RE HOVERING DIRECTLY OVER NIAGARA FALLS...
...WHICH MEANS RIGHT NOW MIGHT NOT BE THE BEST TIME TO DISCUSS IT.
I SUPPOSE I COULD JUST FLY AWAY, BUT I'M NOT SURE THIS THING COULD SURVIVE THE FALL!

PUT HULK DOWN!
HULK WILL NOT BE SAVED BY FRIEND OF BANNER!
WHAM WHAM WHAM
THEN AGAIN.
I'M NOT SURE I'LL BE ABLE TO SURVIVE UP HERE!
AFTER WHAT HAPPENED WITH REBEL, I CANNED THIS ARMOR.
IT'S NEVER BEEN TESTED.
WHAM
IF THE HULK KEEPS POUNDING ON IT --
-- IF IT SHORTS AS A RESULT --
-- THE ARMOR DIES...
... AND I DIE WITH IT!
WHA --?!
MORE LIGHT?!


HULK HATES LOUD BIRDS AND THEIR DUMB LIGHTS!
HULK ALREADY SMASHED ONE --
AT THAT MOMENT...
... IN THE WESTCHESTER COUNTY APARTMENT OF THE RECENTLY UNEMPLOYED PEPPER POTTS...
THIS IS LAURA BLECKER FOR CNN NEWS, AND I...
... HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHAT I'M LOOKING AT!
Mr STARK?
IT'S GOT TO BE HIM... BUT HOW?
WHY?
-- THERE ARE ENOUGH ROCKS HERE TO SMASH ANOTHER!
HULK-- NO!


IN SOMETHING SLIGHTLY FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF THOUGHT --
-- IRON MAN IS AIRBORNE ALMOST BEFORE THE HURLED BOULDER ITSELF!
A HUNDRED OPTIONS RACE THROUGH HIS MIND IN A FRACTION OF THE TIME IT TAKES TO TELL.
"REPULSOR BLAST? THE UPDRAFT WOULD HAMMER THE COPTER!"
"CHEST LASER? TOO RISKY -- SOME DEBRIS MIGHT MAKE IT THROUGH."
IN THE MOMENT BEFORE IMPACT...
... HE DECIDES.
THAT DECISION IS INSTANTLY TRANSLATED INTO ACTION!
TRACTOR BEAM --
THUMM
FWISSS
-- YANKING THEM OUT OF THE LINE OF FIRE?
INSANE.
BUT IT WORKED.


THE TRAIL OF TONY'S BLOOD JUST... STOPS.
BUT EVEN IF HE DROPPED DEAD FROM THE SHRAPNEL --
-- WHERE'D HIS BODY GO?
EKCHAK
Oh. IT'S YOU.
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN A HYDRA AGENT.
THEY TRIED TO DETONATE IT.
BRUCE DIED TRYING TO STOP THEM.
HYDRA WAS HERE?!
THEN THEY MUST HAVE KNOWN ABOUT OP: GAMMA?
APPARENTLY.
THAT IS... UNFORTUNATE.
BUT I'M AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO ASK YOU TO FILL ME IN ON THE DETAILS LATER.
OUR PRIORITY, RIGHT NOW, IS FINDING Mr. STARK.
TONY... HERE?
SOMEWHERE, AND SEVERLY WOUNDED. BUT WE CAN COUNT OURSELVES FORTUNATE --

"-- THAT HE'S FAR AWAY FROM THAT RAMPAGING MONSTER OUTSIDE."
AND THIS TIME, HULK SAYS...
... STAY DOWN!
THINK... I CAN... HANDLE THAT.
HARD PART'LL BE... GETTING UP.
THE BEATING I'VE BEEN... TAKING...
... HAS SERIOUSLY DEPLETED...
... ENERGY SUPPLY.
WHICH MEANS, TONY:
IT'S EITHER IMPROVISE...
... SOON...
... OR DIE.
SPTZZZ

YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE BETTER THAN HULK.
YOU THOUGHT HULK WAS STUPID... THAT YOU COULD USE HULK LIKE EVERYONE USED BANNER.
LIKE STARK USED HIM WORST.
BUT NOW YOU KNOW.
SOON... EVERYONE WILL KNOW.
SOON... WHOLE WORLD WILL KNOW TO BE AFRAID OF HULK.
NO REASON TO...
...DO THAT, HULK.
WRONG AGAIN, IRON MAN.
HULK HAS EVERY REASON TO WANT TO DESTROY THE WORLD.
MAYBE, AFTER HULK SMASHES THE WHOLE WORLD --
-- HULK WILL COME BACK AND EXPLAIN IT.
WARNING! WARNING!
PROMETHEUM ARMOR ENERGY SYSTEM DEPLETED!
TOTAL SYSTEM SHUTDOWN IN TEN SECONDS! REPEAT:
Y'KNOW, THAT'S NOT... THE "CAN DO" ATTITUDE I... LOOK FOR... IN A COMPUTER.

HOPE... ...THIS... ...WORKS.
HEY!
IT WORKED!
WHA--?!
IRON MAN DOES NOT KNOW WHEN TO DIE!

GUURROOARRGH!
ZZZBRAKT
YOU FIRST.
IT IS --
-- FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES --
-- THEIR LAST EXCHANGE.

TOGETHER, THEY FALL...
... AS NIAGARA OPENS WIDE...
... TO EMBRACE THESE TWO.
ONE, A GENIUS IN A SUIT OF ARMOR...
... THE OTHER A FRIGHTENED MAN, TRAPPED WITHIN THE BODY OF THE MOST POWERFUL CREATURE IN THE WORLD.
?!
DADDY?
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TV?
SITWELL?
LOOKS LIKE THE ENTIRE GRID WAS SHUT DOWN...
... WHICH MEANS NOT ONLY ARE WE OUT OF POWER...
... BUT THE ENTIRE SEABOARD JUST WENT DARK...
DOCTOR -- WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WE'LL WORRY ABOUT THAT AFTER WE'VE SAVED THIS MAN'S LIFE, JANE.

NEXT ISSUE: (ASSUMING HE LIVES): IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

MARVEL COMICS
IRON MAN
JAN.97
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
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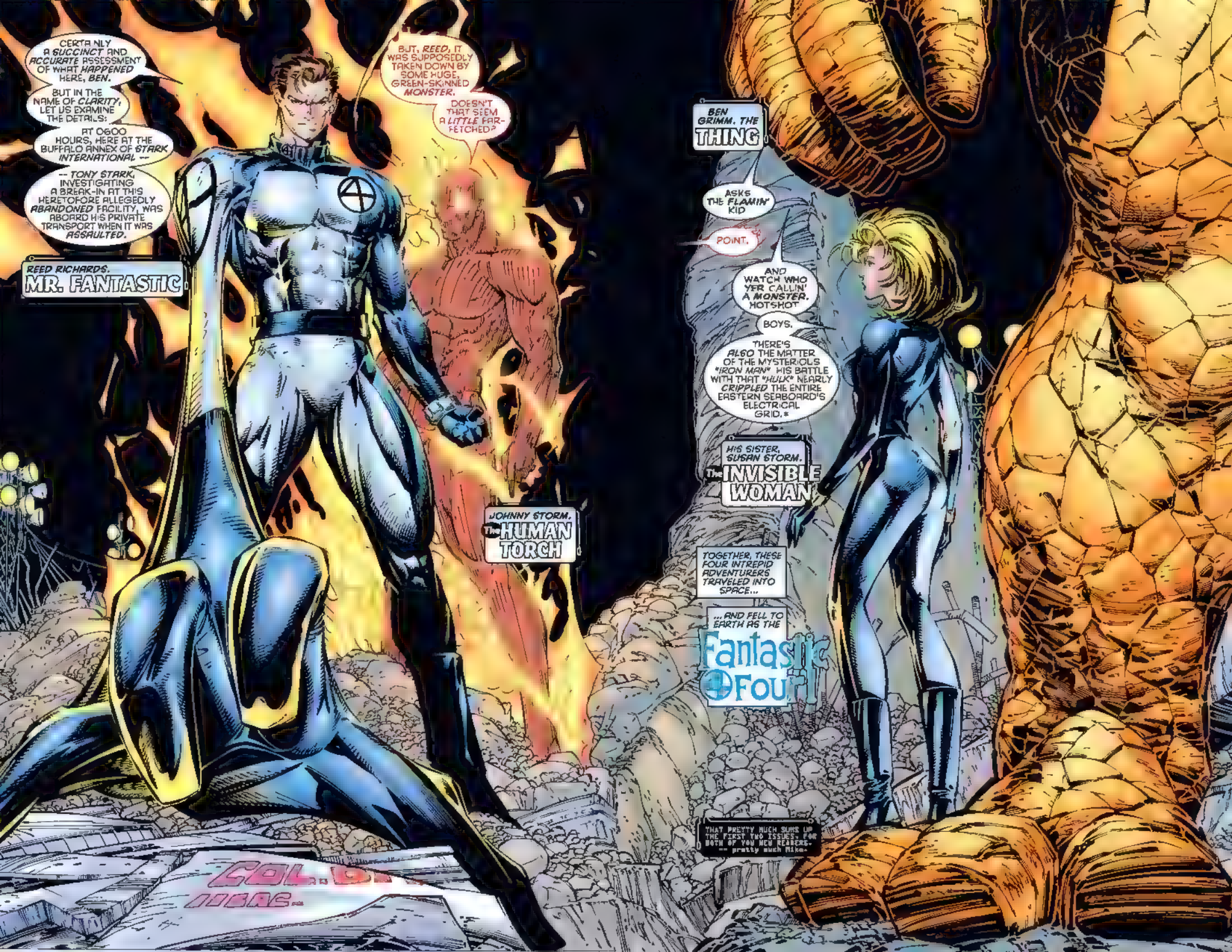
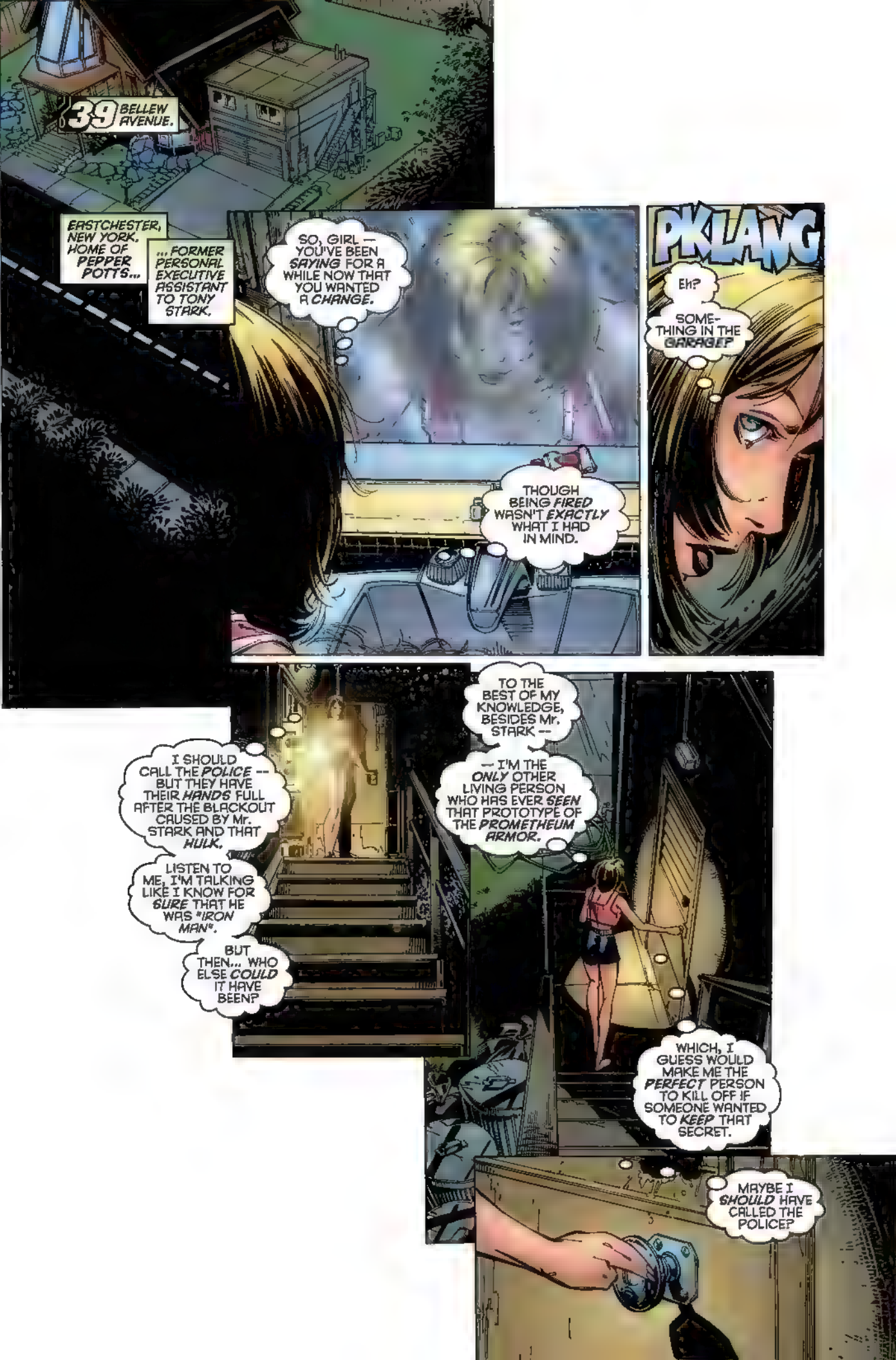
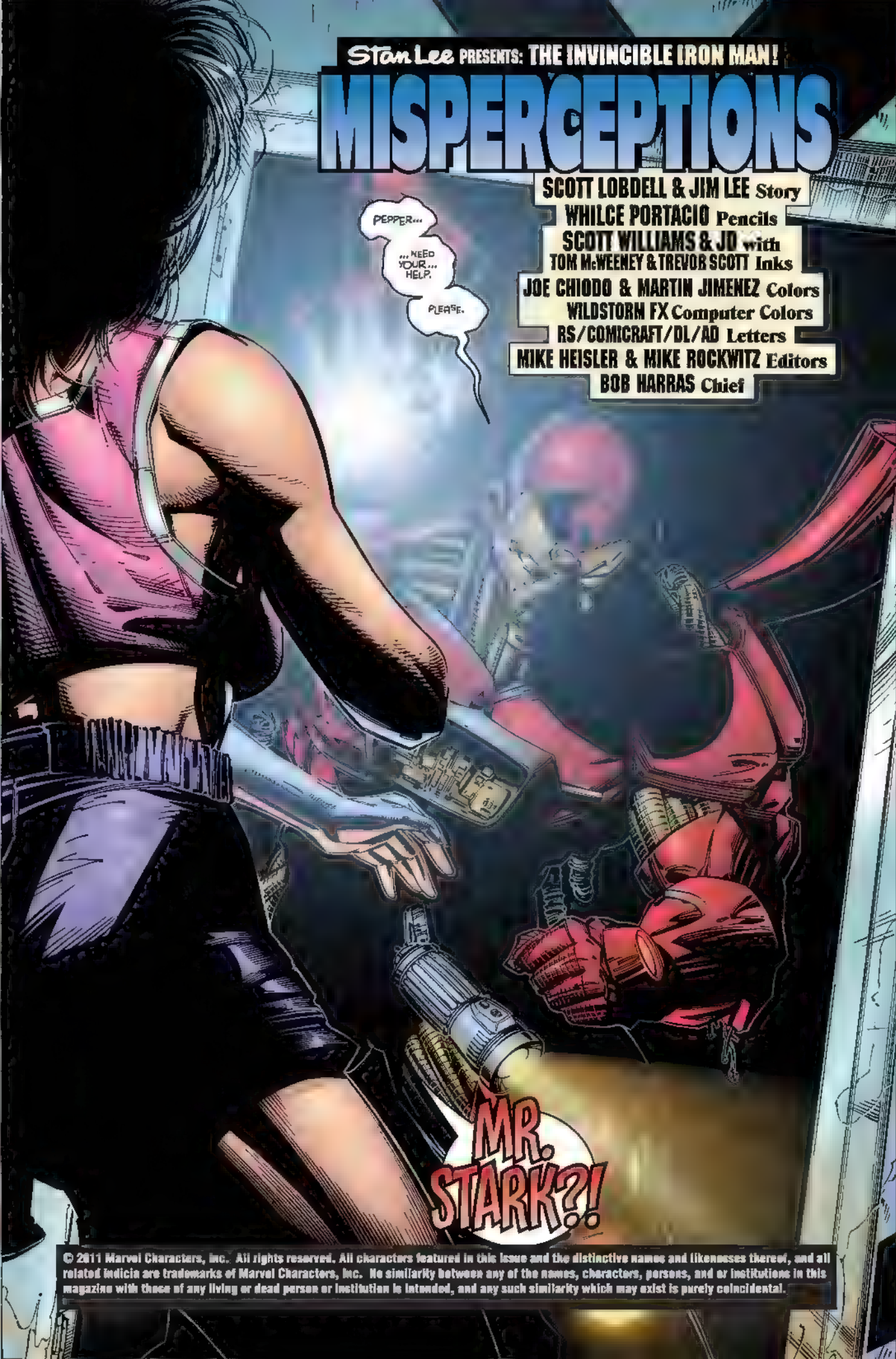
WHOTTA REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT.
STARK-1


CERTAINLY A SUCCINCT AND ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF WHAT HAPPENED HERE, BEN.
BUT IN THE NAME OF CLARITY, LET US EXAMINE THE DETAILS:
AT 0600 HOURS, HERE AT THE BUFFALO ANNEX OF STARK INTERNATIONAL --
-- TONY STARK, INVESTIGATING A BREAK-IN AT THIS HERETOFORE ALLEGEDLY ABANDONED FACILITY, WAS ABOARD HIS PRIVATE TRANSPORT WHEN IT WAS ASSAULTED.
REED RICHARDS. MR. FANTASTIC
BUT, REED, IT WAS SUPPOSEDLY TAKEN DOWN BY SOME HUGE, GREEN-SKINNED MONSTER.
DOESN'T THAT SEEM A LITTLE FAR-FETCHED?
JOHNNY STORM. THE HUMAN TORCH
BEN GRIMM. THE THING
ASKS THE FLAMIN' KID
POINT.
AND WATCH WHO YER CALLIN' A MONSTER, HOTSHOT
BOYS.
THERE'S ALSO THE MATTER OF THE MYSTERIOUS "IRON MAN" HIS BATTLE WITH THAT "HULK" NEARLY CRIPPLED THE ENTIRE EASTERN SEABOARD'S ELECTRICAL GRID.*
HIS SISTER, SUSAN STORM. THE INVISIBLE WOMAN
TOGETHER, THESE FOUR INTREPID ADVENTURERS TRAVELED INTO SPACE...
...AND FELL TO EARTH AS THE Fantastic Four!
THAT PRETTY MUCH SUMS UP THE FIRST TWO ISSUES, FOR BOTH OF YOU NEW READERS. -- pretty much. Nike.

NONE OF WHICH ANSWERS THE QUESTION...
... WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO TONY STARK?
I ONLY ALLOWED YOU ON THIS SECURED SITE AS A COURTESY TO COLONEL NICK FURY.
APPARENTLY HE FELT HE OWED YOU SOMETHING.*
TRUTHFULLY, Dr. RICHARDS, I FIND YOUR SUDDEN INTEREST IN THE PERSONAL AFFAIRS OF YOUR FORMER COLLEGE ROOMMATE TO BE A BIT... SUSPECT.
ESPECIALLY, IN LIGHT OF THE FACT YOU WERE NOT CEABLY ABSENT DURING HIS RECENT TRIAL.
SEE FANTASTIC FOUR 83 FOR DETAILS
-- Detail-Disoriented Mike.
YA MIGHT WANNA CONSIDER SMILIN' WHEN YA SAY THAT, SITWELL.
TONY AND I HAVE DRIFTED APART SINCE COLLEGE, JASPER... THAT'S TRUE.
HE'S BEEN THROUGH A LOT IN THE PAST FEW YEARS.
HE NEEDS HIS FRIENDS AROUND HIM AT A TIME LIKE THIS.
NOW IF YOU'RE DONE --
-- WE HAVE A JOB TO DO.


39 BELLEW AVENUE.
EASTCHESTER, NEW YORK. HOME OF PEPPER POTTS...
... FORMER PERSONAL EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO TONY STARK.
SO, GIRL — YOU'VE BEEN SAYING FOR A WHILE NOW THAT YOU WANTED A CHANGE.
THOUGH BEING FIRED WASN'T EXACTLY WHAT I HAD IN MIND.
PKLANG
Eh?
SOME-THING IN THE GARAGE?
I SHOULD CALL THE POLICE -- BUT THEY HAVE THEIR HANDS FULL AFTER THE BLACKOUT CAUSED BY Mr. STARK AND THAT HULK.
LISTEN TO ME, I'M TALKING LIKE I KNOW FOR SURE THAT HE WAS "IRON MAN".
BUT THEN... WHO ELSE COULD IT HAVE BEEN?
TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, BESIDES Mr. STARK --
-- I'M THE ONLY OTHER LIVING PERSON WHO HAS EVER SEEN THAT PROTOTYPE OF THE PROMETHEUM ARMOR.
WHICH, I GUESS WOULD MAKE ME THE PERFECT PERSON TO KILL OFF IF SOMEONE WANTED TO KEEP THAT SECRET.
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE CALLED THE POLICE?


Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN!
MISPERCEPTIONS
SCOTT LOBDELL & JIM LEE Story
WHILCE PORTACIO Pencils
SCOTT WILLIAMS & JD with TOM McWEENEY & TREVOR SCOTT Inks
JOE CHIODO & MARTIN JIMENEZ Colors
WILDSTORM FX Computer Colors
RS/COMICRAFT/DL/AD Letters
MIKE HEISLER & MIKE ROCKWITZ Editors
BOB HARRAS Chief
PEPPER...
...NEED YOUR... HELP.
PLEASE.
MR. STARK?!

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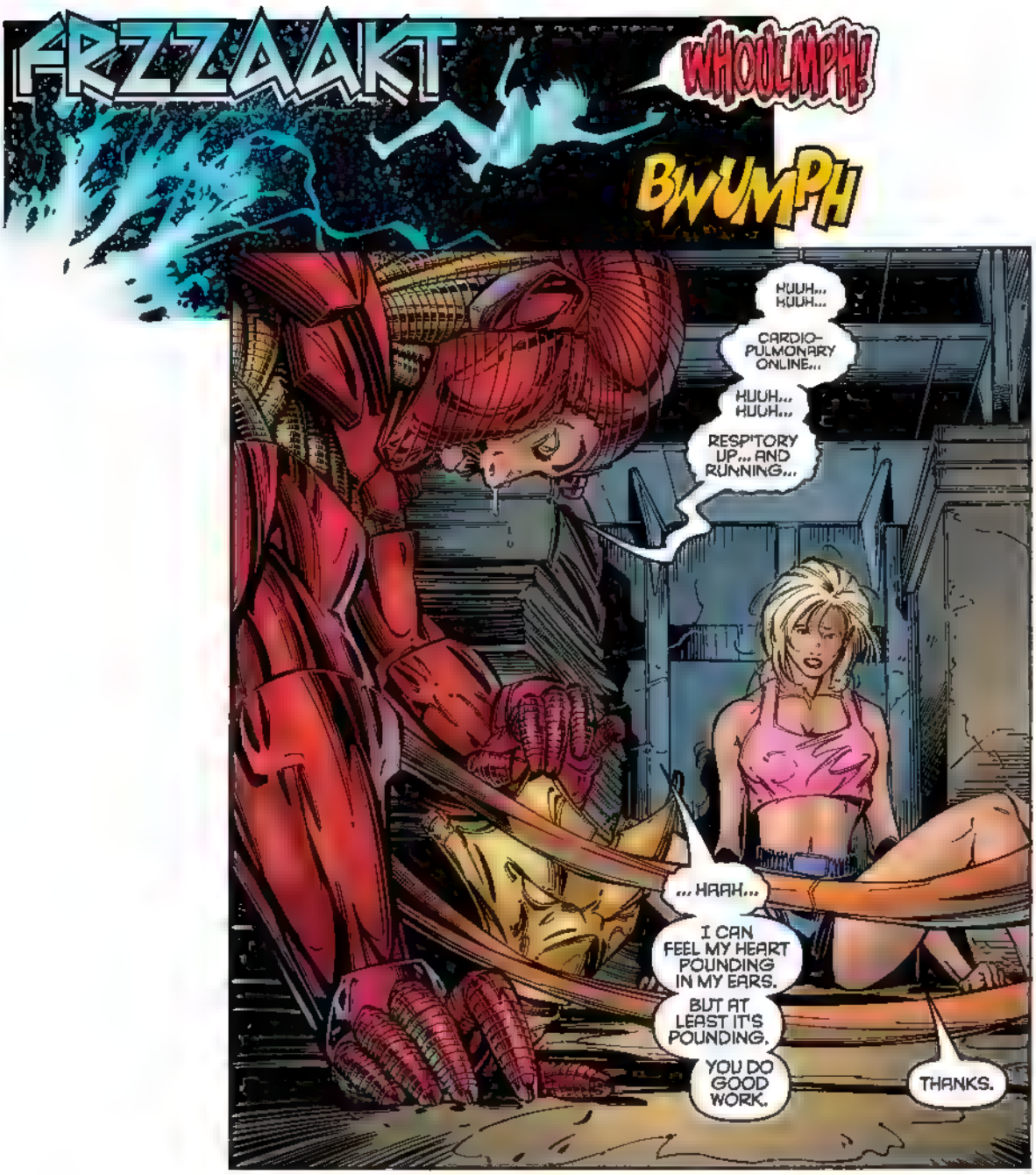
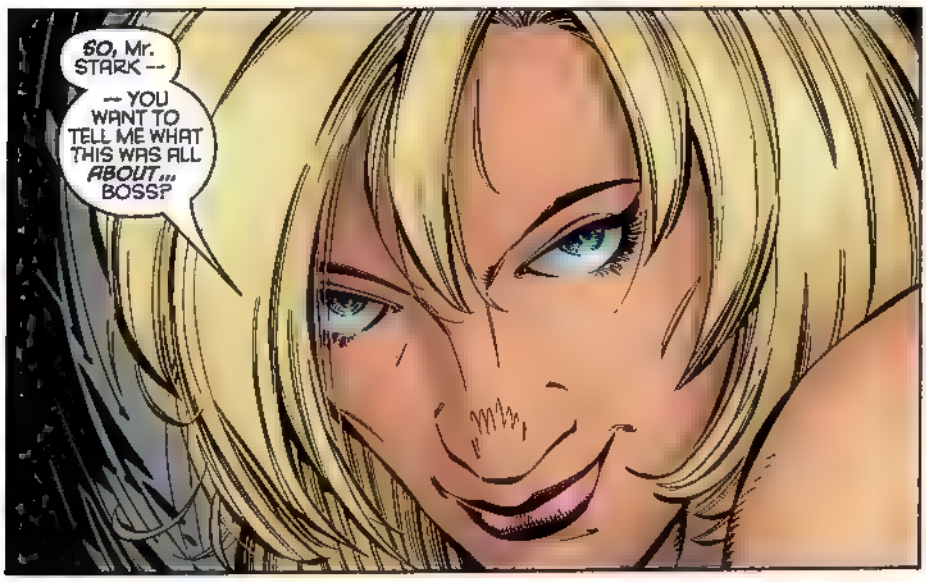
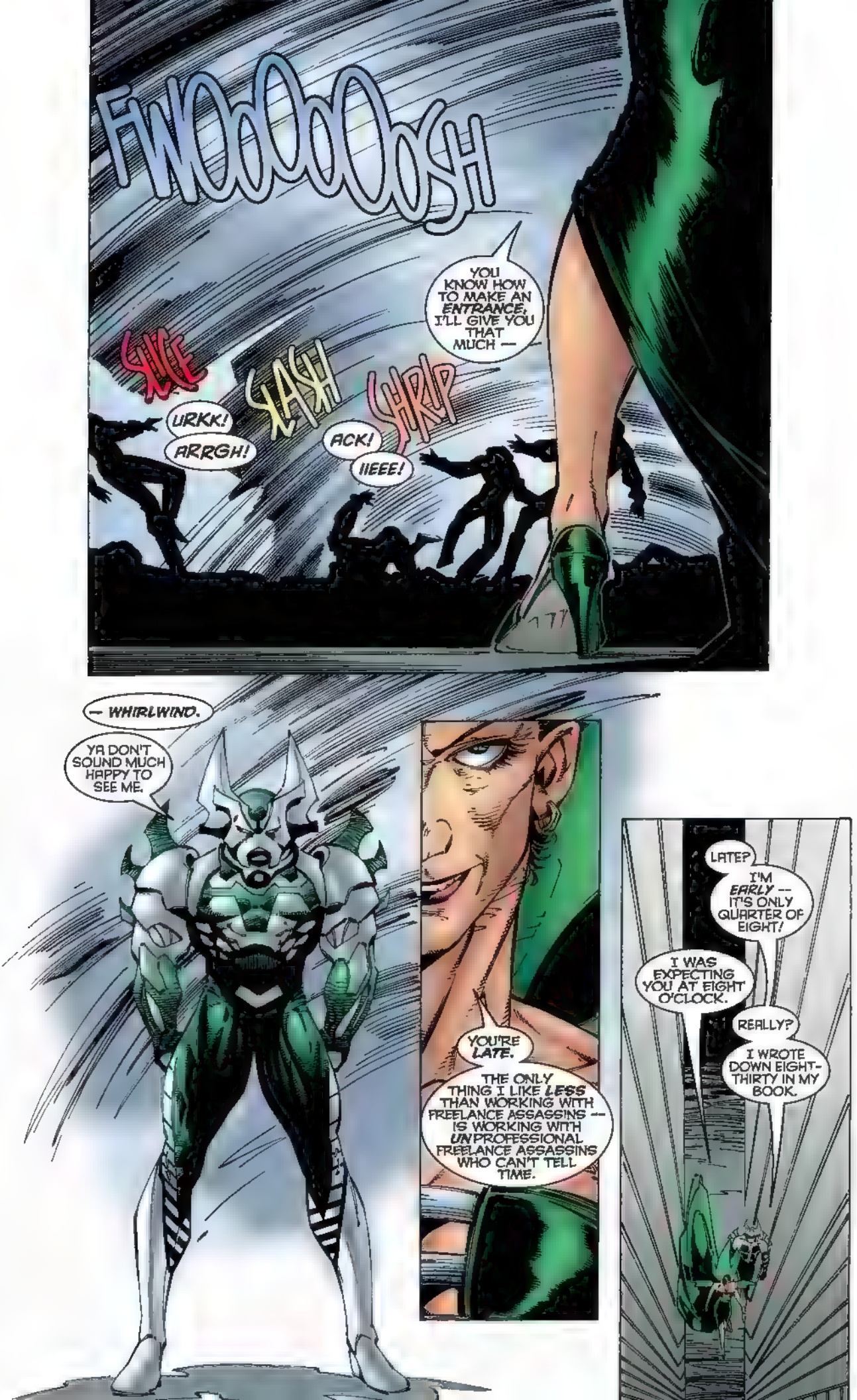
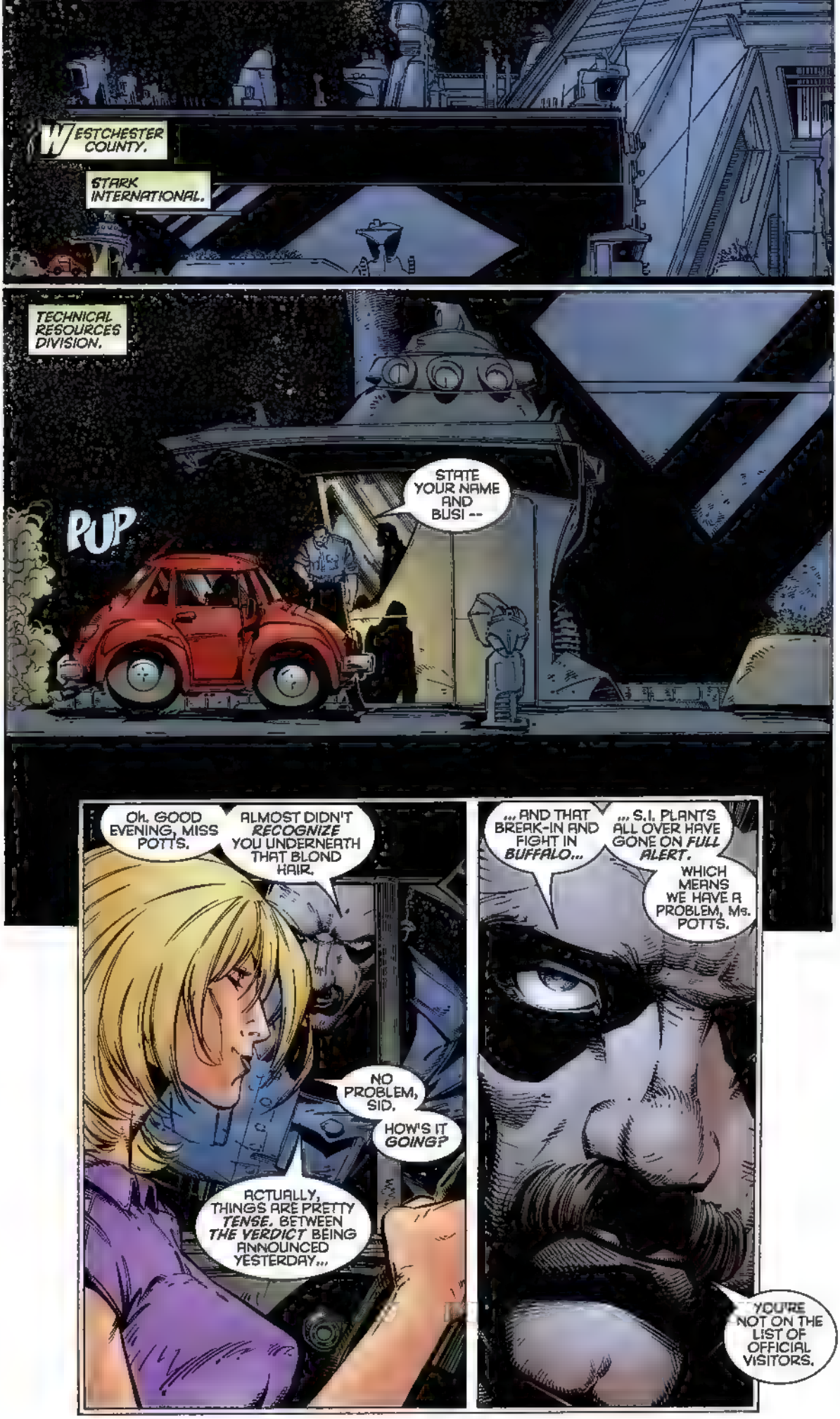
ARMOR... PROTOTYPE...
...ONLY THING... KEEPING ME... ALIVE.
HEART... NEARLY... SHREDDED.
ENERGY... DEPLETED.
PLEASE...
...HELP.
Um
Um
Um
Um
"HEART"
"ENERGY"
GOT IT!
JUMPERS... BATTERY.
GOD, I HOPE THIS WORKS.
IF I DON'T GET T'SAY... LATER...
...THANKS.
FOR EV'THING.
SHUT UP.
SIR.

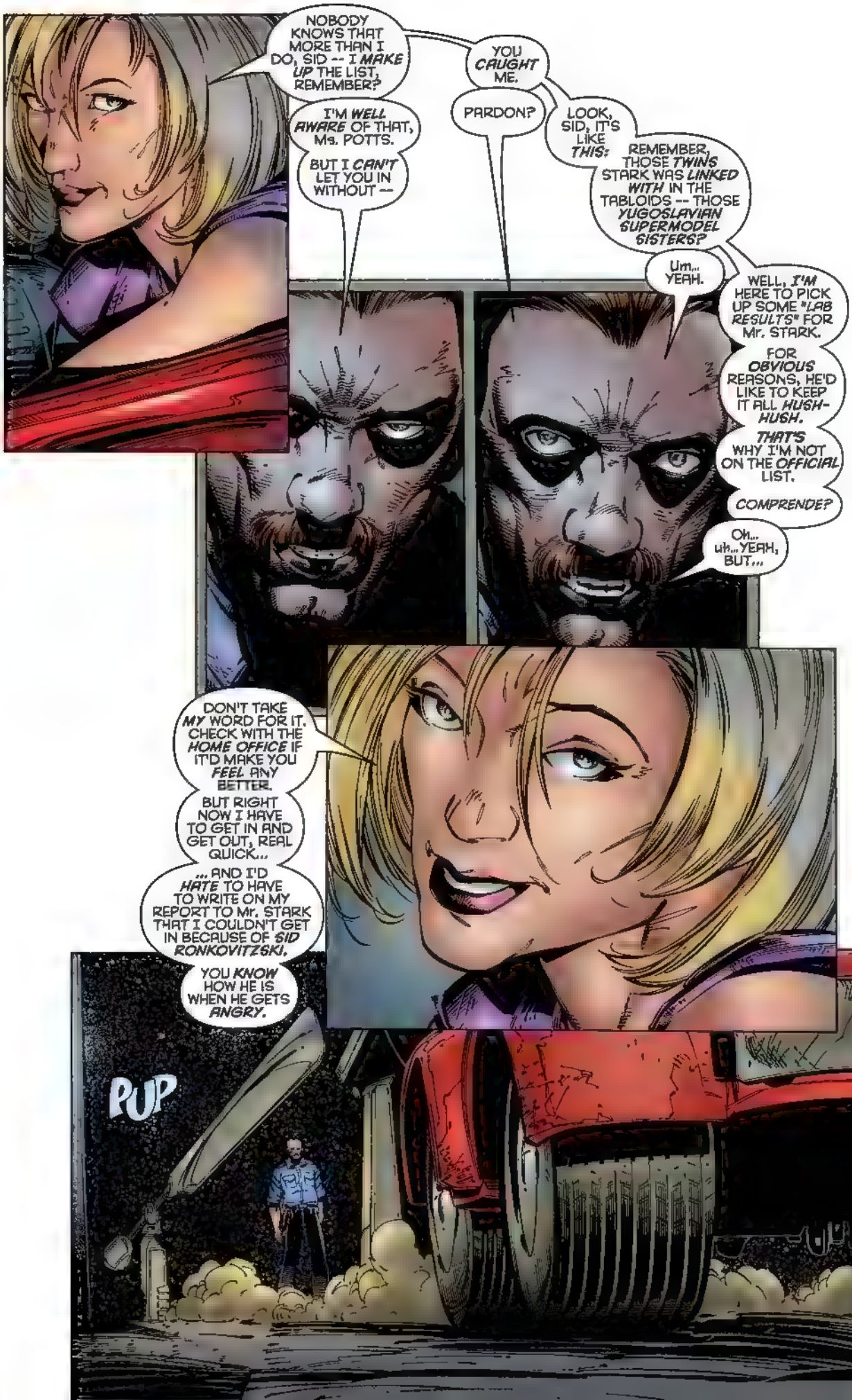

FRZZAAKT
WHOUMPH!
BWUMPH
HUUH... HUUH...
CARDIO-PULMONARY ONLINE...
HUUH... HUUH...
RESP'TORY UP... AND RUNNING...
... HAAH...
I CAN FEEL MY HEART POUNDING IN MY EARS.
BUT AT LEAST IT'S POUNDING.
YOU DO GOOD WORK.
THANKS.

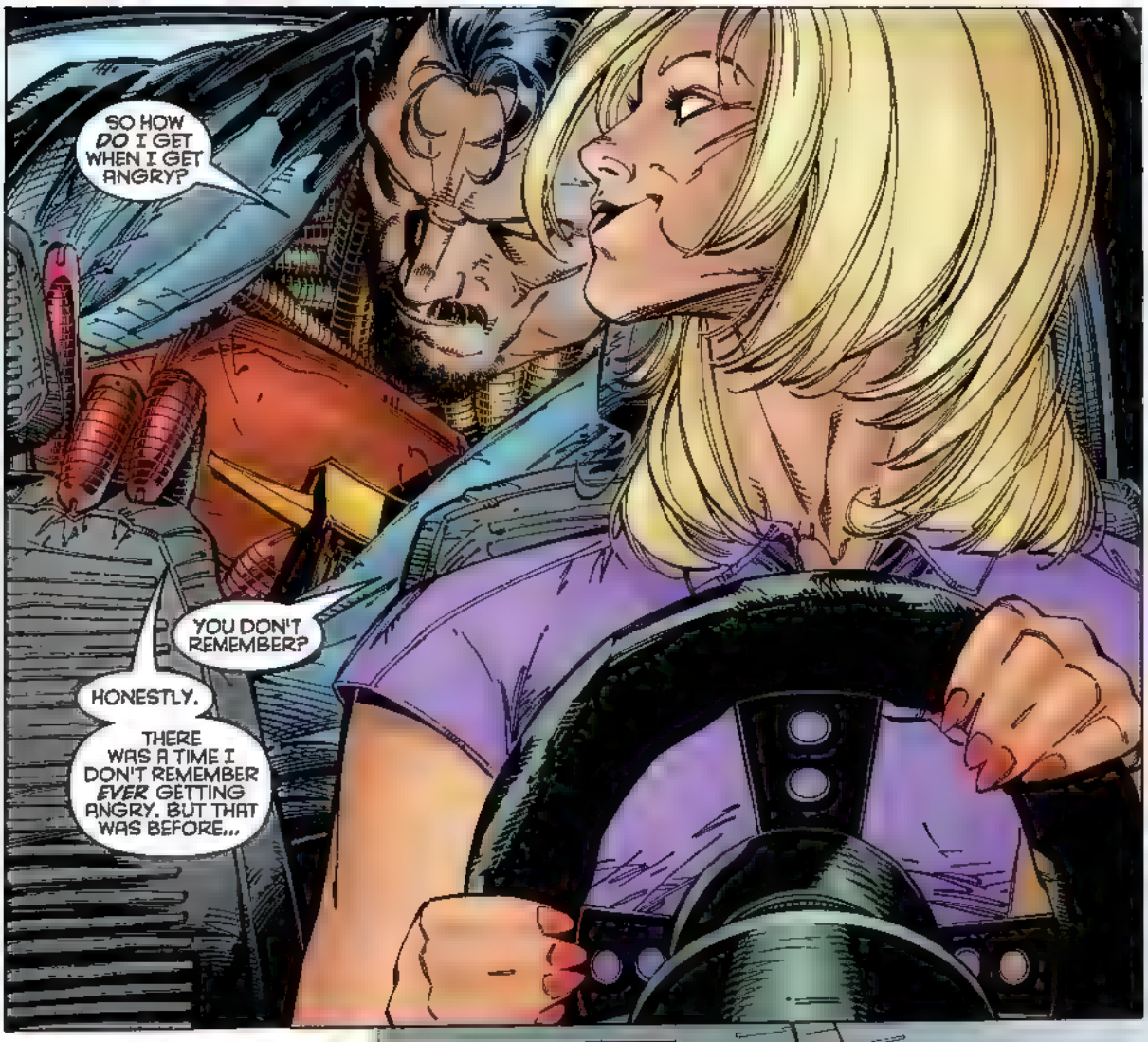

SO, Mr. STARK --
-- YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHAT THIS WAS ALL ABOUT... BOSS?

MEANWHILE...
STILL NO WORD FROM OUT INTENDED GUEST?
NO, MADAME HYDRA.
THIS IS INTOLERABLE. DOESN'T HE REALIZE THAT HYDRA'S GOAL IS COMPLETE AND UTTER WORLD DOMINATION...
...AND THAT WE DO NOT SUFFER FOOLS GLADLY?
APPARENTLY NOT, MADAME HYDRA.
WHEN AND IF HE DOES ARRIVE...
...KILL HIM.
HAIL HYDRA.
HAIL HYD--
Shhh.
DO YOU HEAR THAT..?
FEEL THAT?
HE'S HERE.


FWOOOOOSH
YOU KNOW HOW TO MAKE AN ENTRANCE, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT MUCH —
SLICE
URKK!
ARRGH!
SLASH
ACK!
SHRIP
IIEEE!
— WHIRLWIND.
YA DON'T SOUND MUCH HAPPY TO SEE ME.
YOU'RE LATE.
THE ONLY THING I LIKE LESS THAN WORKING WITH FREELANCE ASSASSINS — IS WORKING WITH UNPROFESSIONAL FREELANCE ASSASSINS WHO CAN'T TELL TIME.
LATE?
I'M EARLY — IT'S ONLY QUARTER OF EIGHT!
I WAS EXPECTING YOU AT EIGHT O'CLOCK.
REALLY?
I WROTE DOWN EIGHT-THIRTY IN MY BOOK.

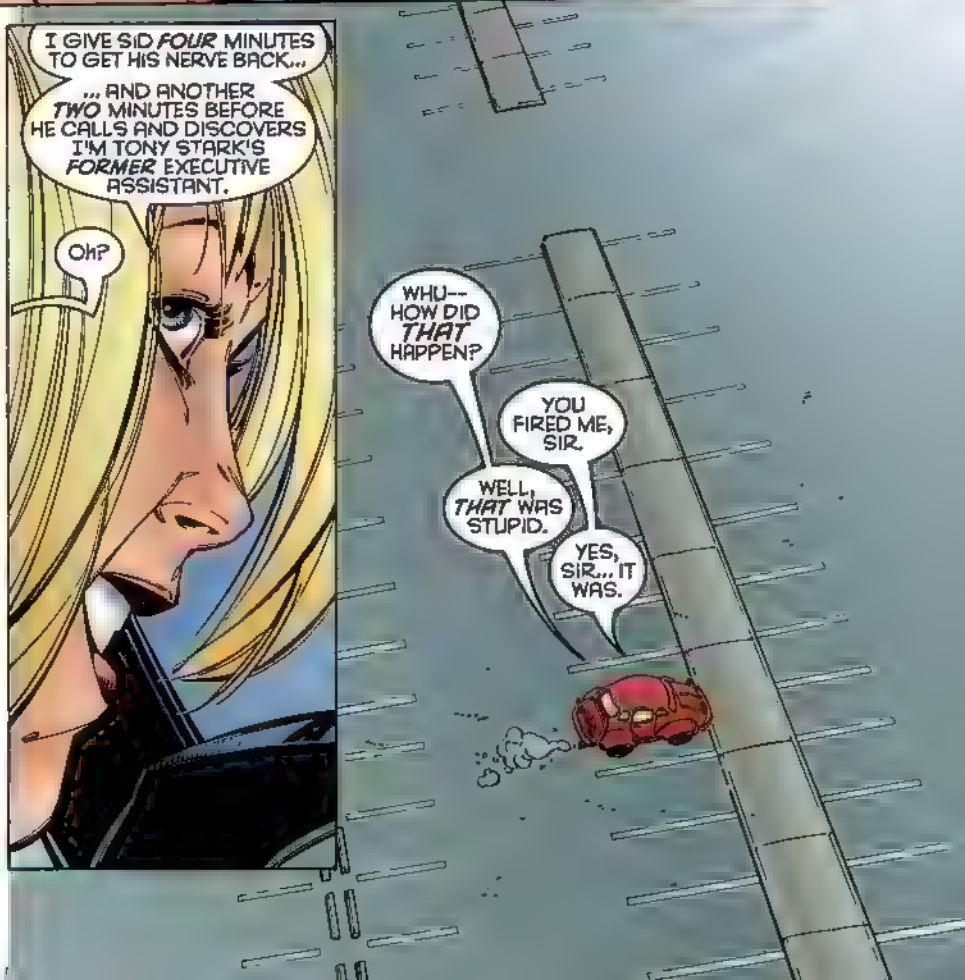

WESTCHESTER COUNTY.
STARK INTERNATIONAL.
TECHNICAL RESOURCES DIVISION.
PUP
STATE YOUR NAME AND BUSI --
Oh. GOOD EVENING, MISS POTTS.
ALMOST DIDN'T *RECOGNIZE* YOU UNDERNEATH THAT BLOND HAIR.
NO PROBLEM, SID.
HOW'S IT *GOING?*
ACTUALLY, THINGS ARE PRETTY *TENSE.* BETWEEN *THE VERDICT* BEING ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY...
... AND THAT BREAK-IN AND FIGHT IN *BUFFALO...*
... S.I. PLANTS ALL OVER HAVE GONE ON *FULL ALERT.*
WHICH MEANS WE HAVE A PROBLEM, Ms. POTTS.
YOU'RE NOT ON THE LIST OF OFFICIAL VISITORS.

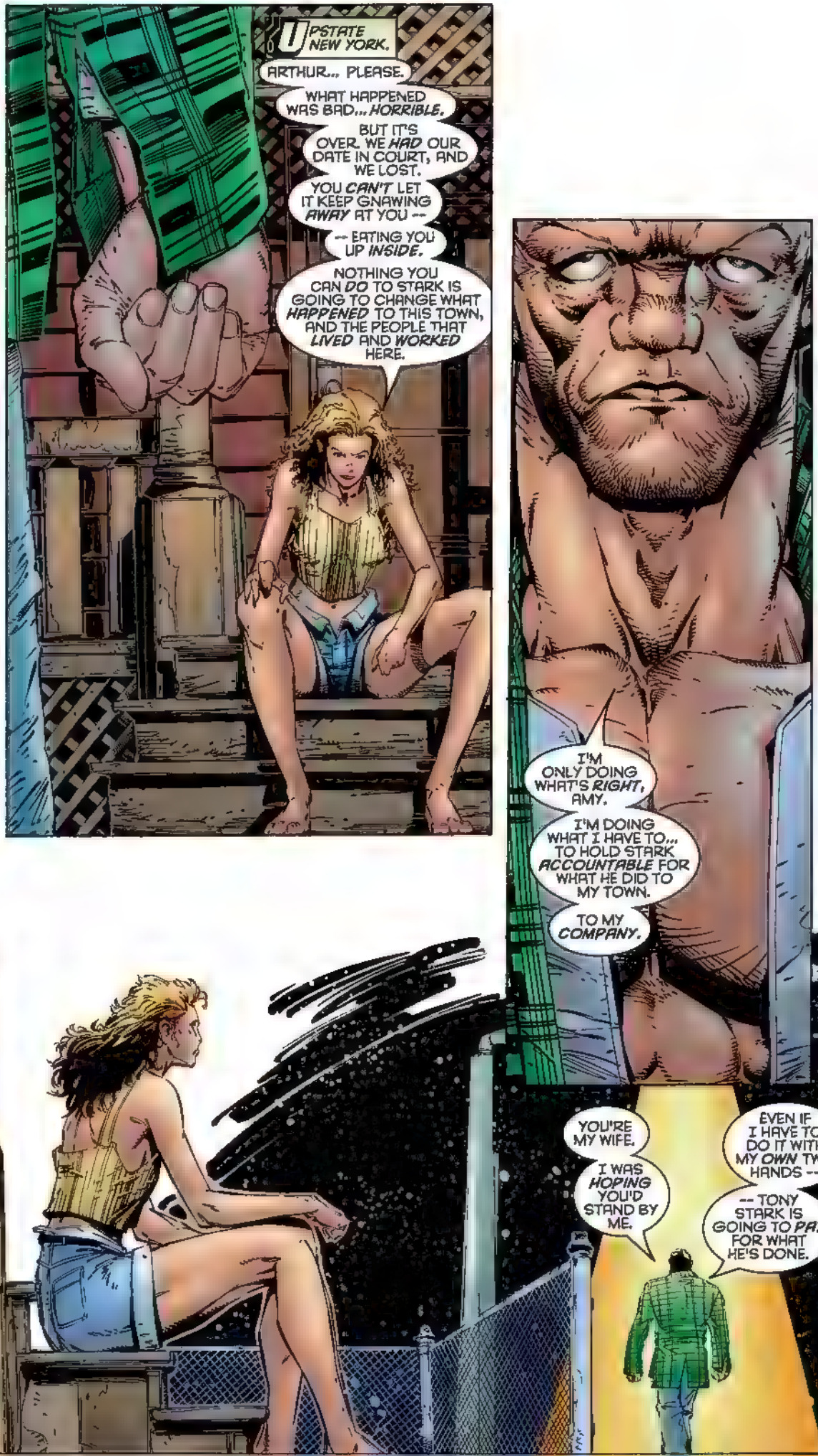

NOBODY KNOWS THAT MORE THAN I DO, SID -- I *MAKE UP* THE LIST, REMEMBER?
I'M *WELL AWARE* OF THAT, Ms. POTTS.
BUT I *CAN'T* LET YOU IN WITHOUT --
YOU *CAUGHT* ME.
PARDON?
LOOK, SID, IT'S LIKE *THIS:* REMEMBER THOSE *TWINS* STARK WAS *LINKED WITH* IN THE TABLOIDS -- THOSE *YUGOSLAVIAN SUPERMODEL SISTERS?*
Um... YEAH.
WELL, *I'M* HERE TO PICK UP SOME "*LAB RESULTS*" FOR Mr. STARK.
FOR *OBVIOUS* REASONS, HE'D LIKE TO KEEP IT ALL *HUSH-HUSH.*
THAT'S WHY I'M NOT ON THE *OFFICIAL* LIST.
COMPRENDE?
Oh... uh... YEAH, BUT...
DON'T TAKE *MY* WORD FOR IT. CHECK WITH THE *HOME OFFICE* IF IT'D MAKE YOU *FEEL* ANY BETTER.
BUT RIGHT NOW I HAVE TO GET IN AND GET OUT, REAL QUICK...
... AND I'D *HATE* TO HAVE TO WRITE ON MY REPORT TO Mr. STARK THAT I COULDN'T GET IN BECAUSE OF *SID RONKOVITZSKI.*
YOU *KNOW* HOW HE IS WHEN HE GETS *ANGRY.*
PUP

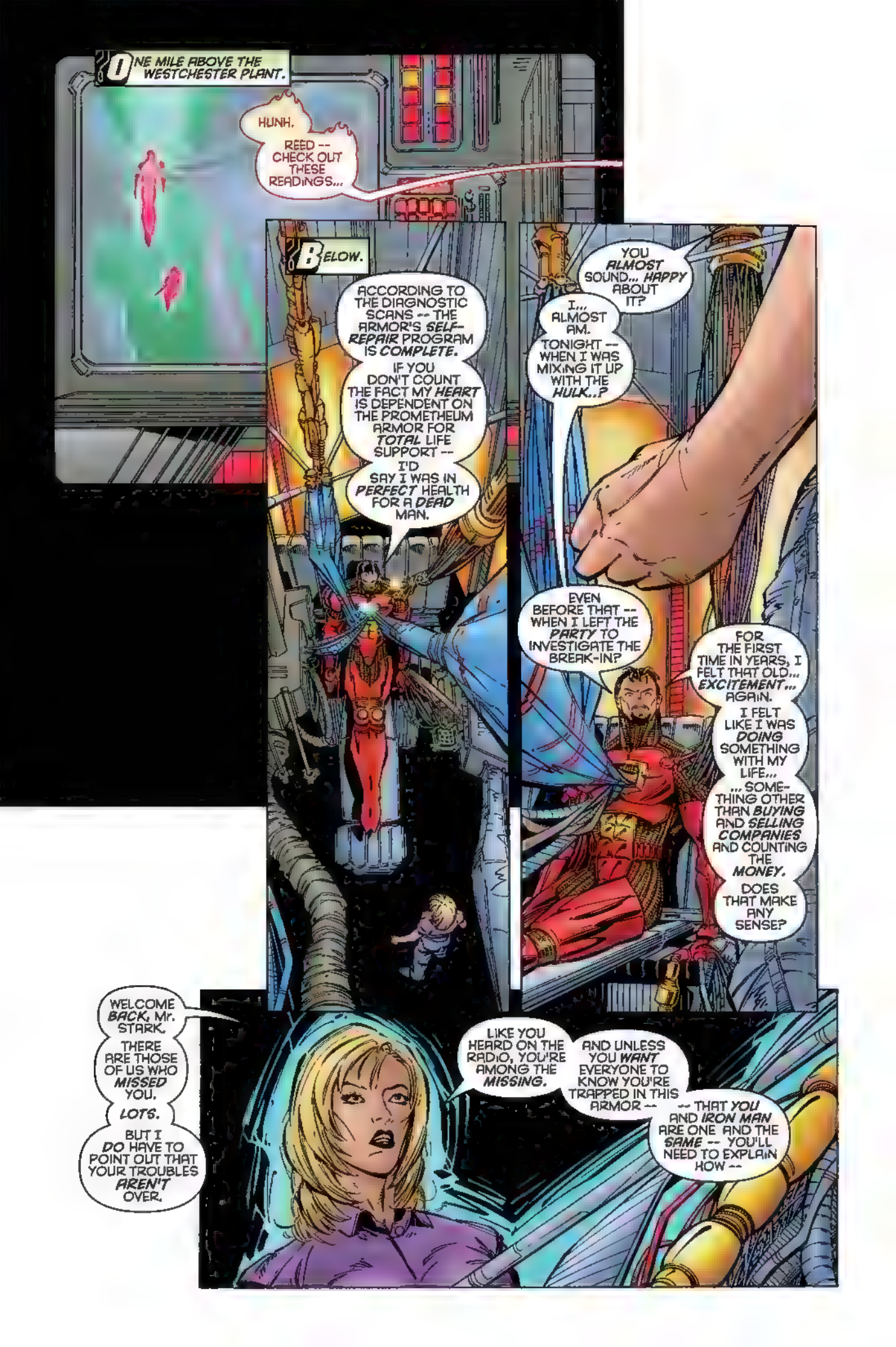

SO HOW DO I GET WHEN I GET ANGRY?
YOU DON'T REMEMBER?
HONESTLY.
THERE WAS A TIME I DON'T REMEMBER EVER GETTING ANGRY. BUT THAT WAS BEFORE...

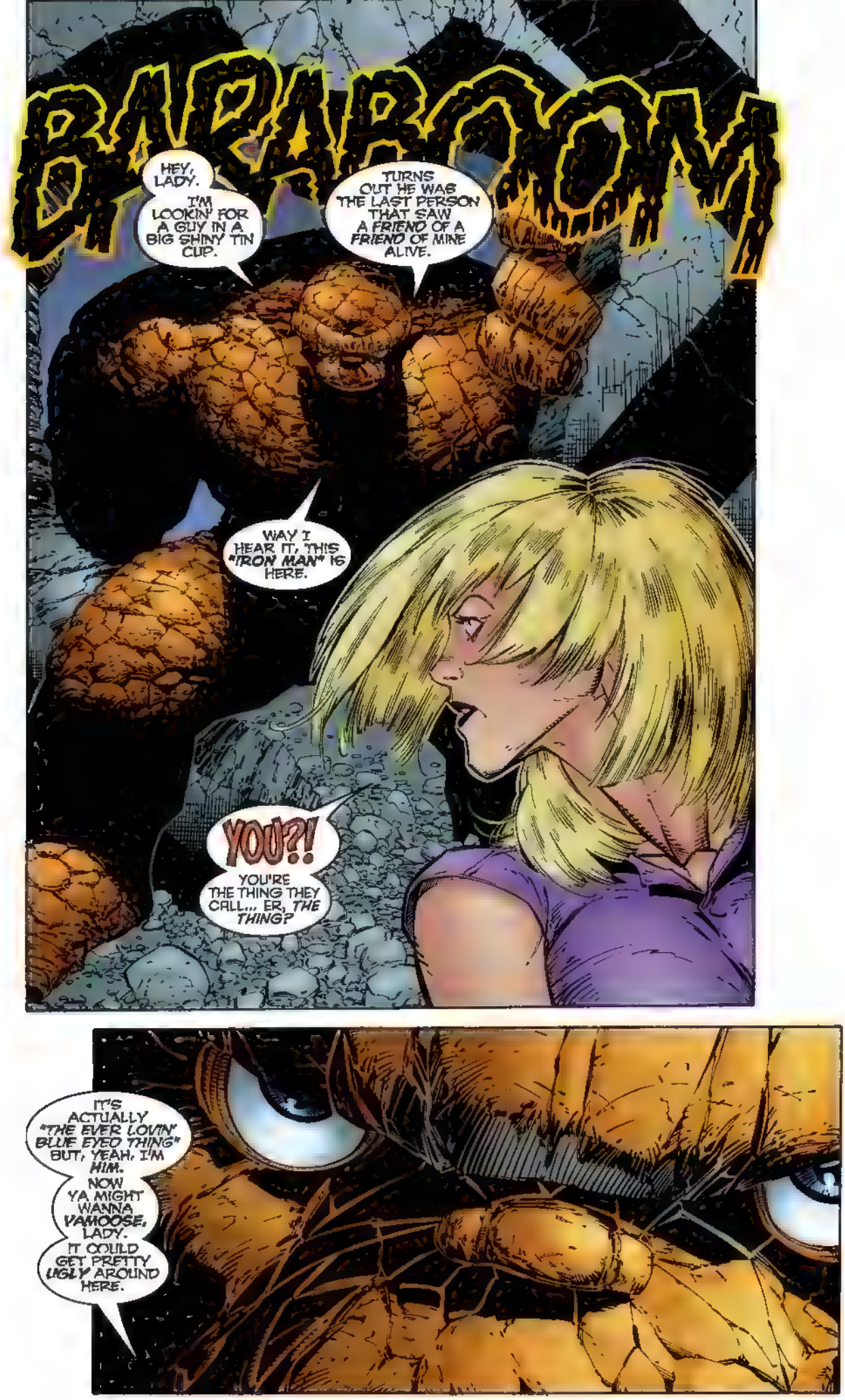
YOU KNOW.
YES, SIR. I KNOW.
FOR THE RECORD, I FIGURE WE HAVE ABOUT SIX MINUTES BEFORE WE'RE BUSTED.

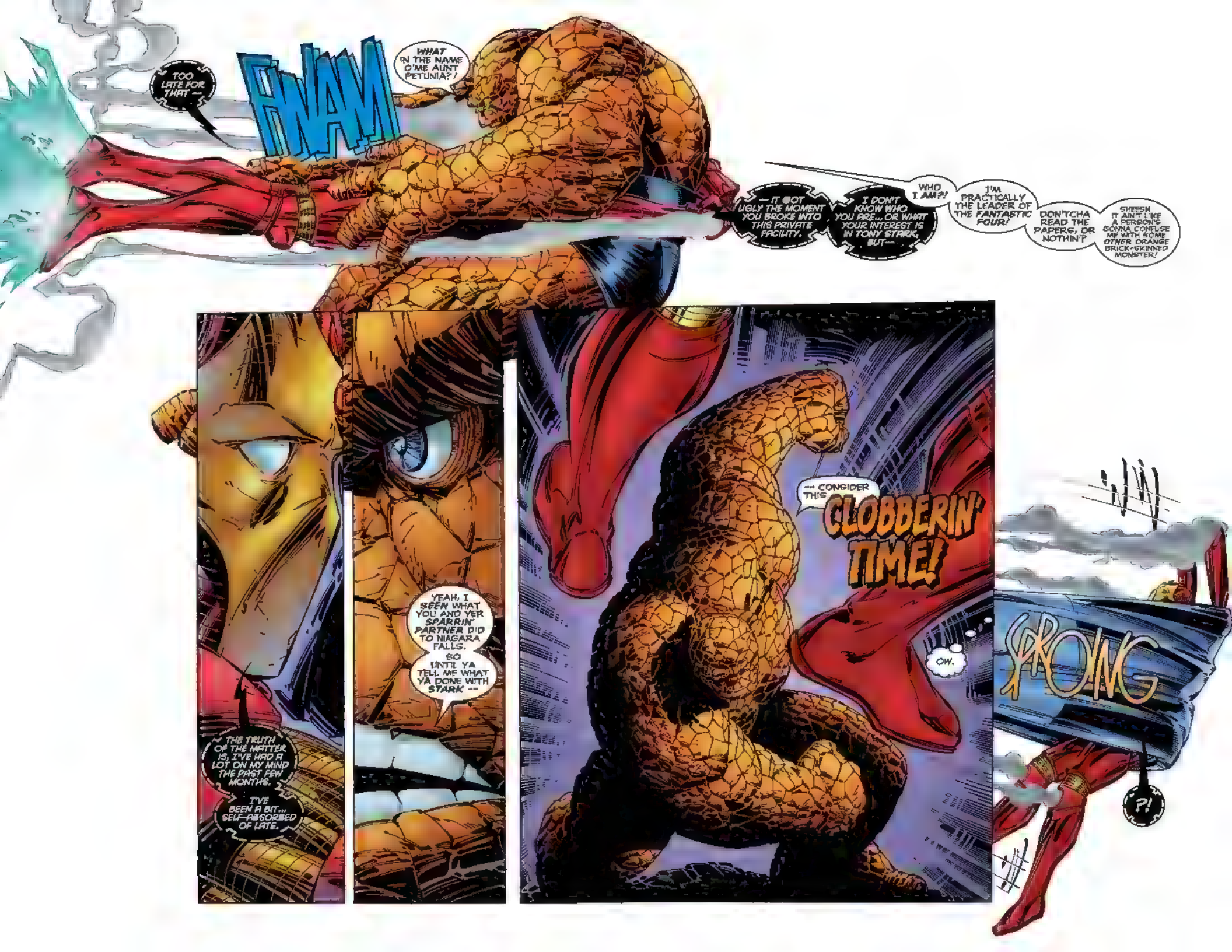
I GIVE SID FOUR MINUTES TO GET HIS NERVE BACK...
... AND ANOTHER TWO MINUTES BEFORE HE CALLS AND DISCOVERS I'M TONY STARK'S FORMER EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT.
OH?


WHU-- HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?
YOU FIRED ME, SIR.
WELL, THAT WAS STUPID.
YES, SIR... IT WAS.

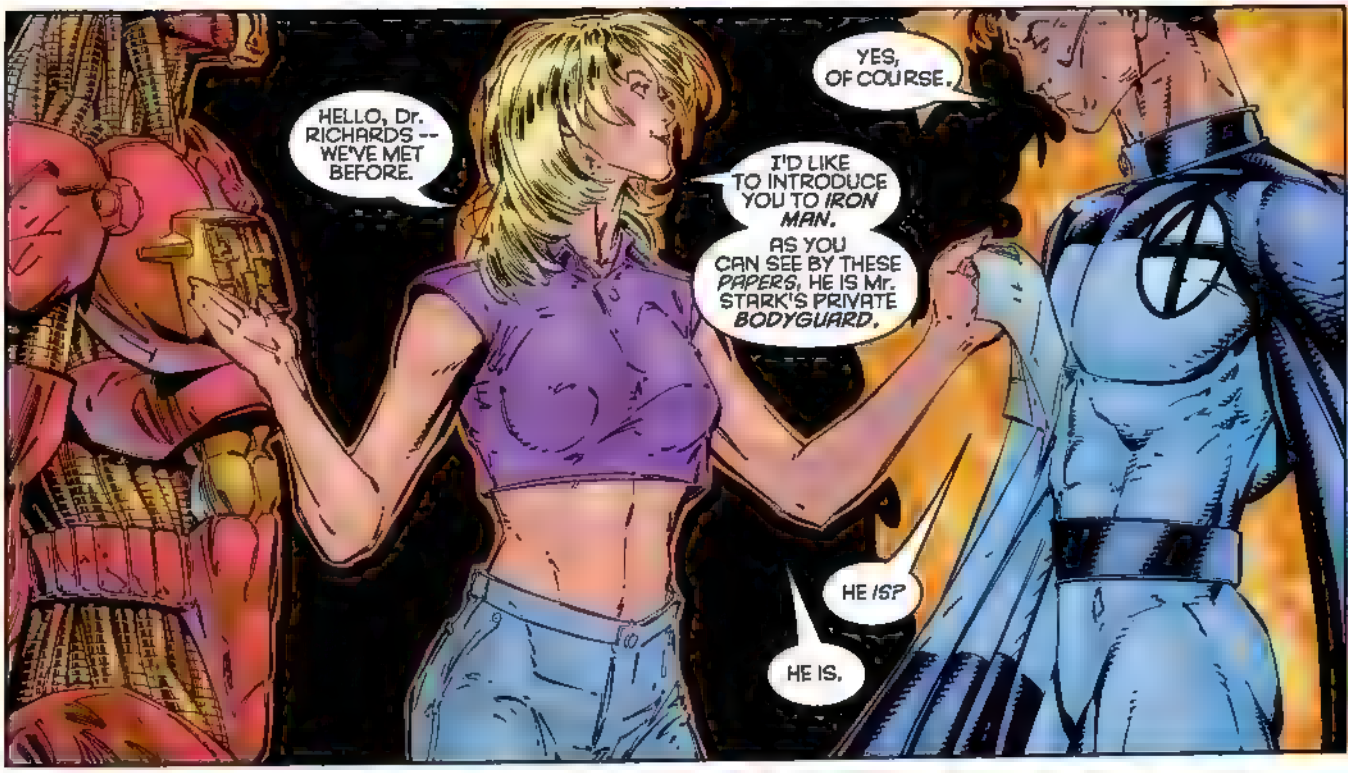

UPSTATE NEW YORK.
ARTHUR... PLEASE.
WHAT HAPPENED WAS BAD... HORRIBLE.
BUT IT'S OVER. WE HAD OUR DATE IN COURT, AND WE LOST.
YOU CAN'T LET IT KEEP GNAWING AWAY AT YOU --
-- EATING YOU UP INSIDE.
NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO STARK IS GOING TO CHANGE WHAT HAPPENED TO THIS TOWN, AND THE PEOPLE THAT LIVED AND WORKED HERE.
I'M ONLY DOING WHAT'S RIGHT, AMY.
I'M DOING WHAT I HAVE TO... TO HOLD STARK ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT HE DID TO MY TOWN.
TO MY COMPANY.
YOU'RE MY WIFE.
I WAS HOPING YOU'D STAND BY ME.
EVEN IF I HAVE TO DO IT WITH MY OWN TWO HANDS --
-- TONY STARK IS GOING TO PAY FOR WHAT HE'S DONE.

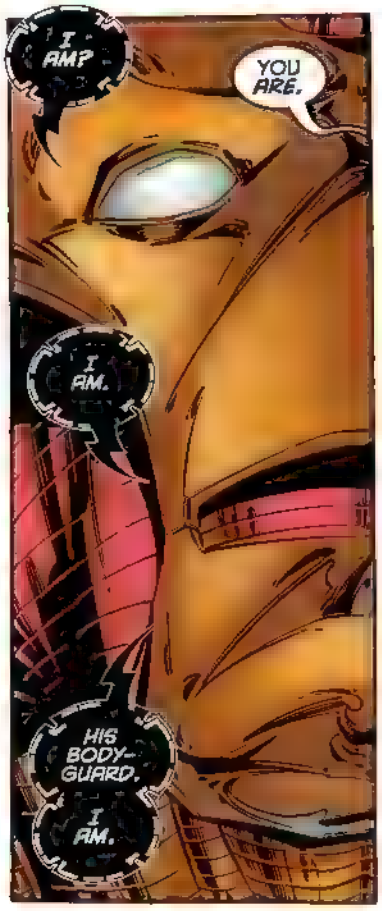

ONE MILE ABOVE THE WESTCHESTER PLANT.
HUNH.
REED -- CHECK OUT THESE READINGS...
BELOW.
ACCORDING TO THE DIAGNOSTIC SCANS -- THE ARMOR'S SELF-REPAIR PROGRAM IS COMPLETE.
IF YOU DON'T COUNT THE FACT MY HEART IS DEPENDENT ON THE PROMETHEUM ARMOR FOR TOTAL LIFE SUPPORT -- I'D SAY I WAS IN PERFECT HEALTH FOR A DEAD MAN.
YOU ALMOST SOUND... HAPPY ABOUT IT?
I... ALMOST AM. TONIGHT -- WHEN I WAS MIXING IT UP WITH THE HULK..?
EVEN BEFORE THAT -- WHEN I LEFT THE PARTY TO INVESTIGATE THE BREAK-IN?
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, I FELT THAT OLD... EXCITEMENT... AGAIN.
I FELT LIKE I WAS DOING SOMETHING WITH MY LIFE...
... SOMETHING OTHER THAN BUYING AND SELLING COMPANIES AND COUNTING THE MONEY.
DOES THAT MAKE ANY SENSE?
WELCOME BACK, Mr. STARK.
THERE ARE THOSE OF US WHO MISSED YOU.
LOTS.
BUT I DO HAVE TO POINT OUT THAT YOUR TROUBLES AREN'T OVER.
LIKE YOU HEARD ON THE RADIO, YOU'RE AMONG THE MISSING.
AND UNLESS YOU WANT EVERYONE TO KNOW YOU'RE TRAPPED IN THIS ARMOR --
-- THAT YOU AND IRON MAN ARE ONE AND THE SAME -- YOU'LL NEED TO EXPLAIN HOW --

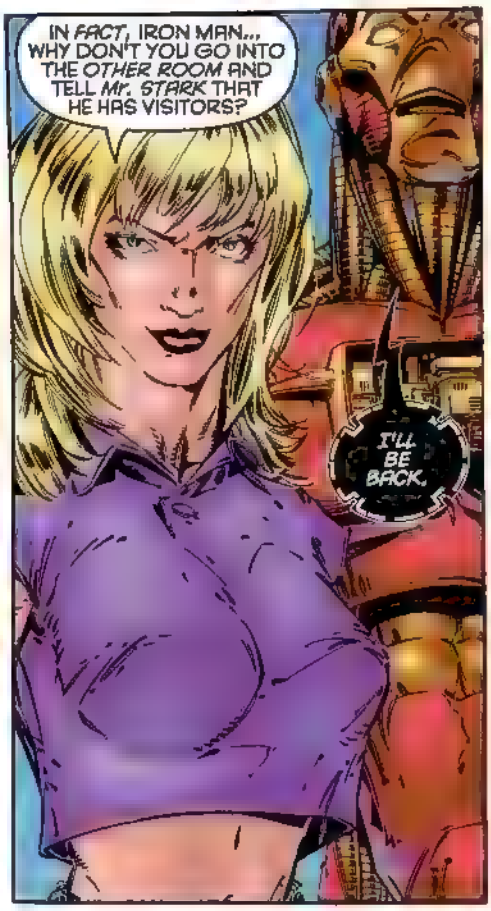

BARROOM
HEY, LADY.
I'M LOOKIN' FOR A GUY IN A BIG SHINY TIN CUP.
TURNS OUT HE WAS THE LAST PERSON THAT SAW A *FRIEND* OF A *FRIEND* OF MINE ALIVE.
WAY I HEAR IT, THIS "*IRON MAN*" IS HERE.
YOU?!
YOU'RE THE THING THEY CALL... ER, *THE THING?*
IT'S ACTUALLY "*THE EVER LOVIN' BLUE EYED THING*" BUT, YEAH, I'M *HIM*.
NOW YA MIGHT WANNA *VAMOOSE*, LADY.
IT COULD GET PRETTY *UGLY* AROUND HERE.


TOO LATE FOR THAT --
FWAM
WHAT IN THE NAME O'ME AUNT PETUNIA?!
-- IT GOT UGLY THE MOMENT YOU BROKE INTO THIS PRIVATE FACILITY.
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE... OR WHAT YOUR INTEREST IS IN TONY STARK, BUT--
WHO I AM?!
I'M PRACTICALLY THE LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
DON'TCHA READ THE PAPERS, OR NOTHIN'?
SHEESH. IT AIN'T LIKE A PERSON'S GONNA CONFUSE ME WITH SOME OTHER ORANGE BRICK-SKINNED MONSTER!
~ THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS, I'VE HAD A LOT ON MY MIND THE PAST FEW MONTHS.
I'VE BEEN A BIT... SELF-ABSORBED OF LATE.
YEAH, I SEEN WHAT YOU AND YER SPARRIN' PARTNER DID TO NIAGARA FALLS.
SO UNTIL YA TELL ME WHAT YA DONE WITH STARK --
-- CONSIDER THIS
CLOBBERIN' TIME!
OW.
SPROING
?!

EXCUSE MY COLLEAGUE, "IRON MAN". BEN TENDS TO GET A BIT... ENTHUSIASTIC.
IT'S WHY WE LOVE HIM.
I DON'T FIND IT NEARLY AS ENDEARING.
BUT THEN I'M NOT WITHOUT MY OWN FAULTS.
I'M NOT REAL BIG ON PATIENCE.
SEE?
YEARGH!
REED — ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M FINE, SUE. IT WAS A LOW GRADE E.M. PULSE.
IT'S PROBABLY WHAT I DESERVE FOR GRABBING FIRST AND ASKING QUESTIONS LATER...
... FOR ASSUMING OUR FRIEND HERE IS AN ENEMY.
"REED"?
REED RICHARDS?
DO I KNOW YOU?
DO YOU?
DO I TELL HIM THE TRUTH?
THAT I'M ONE OF HIS BEST FRIENDS FROM COLLEGE...
... WHEN THE WORLD WAS A BRIGHTER PLACE.
AND I... I WAS A BETTER PERSON.


HELLO, Dr. RICHARDS -- WE'VE MET BEFORE.
YES, OF COURSE.
I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO IRON MAN.
AS YOU CAN SEE BY THESE PAPERS, HE IS Mr. STARK'S PRIVATE BODYGUARD.
HE IS?
HE IS.


I AM?
YOU ARE.
I AM.
HIS BODY-GUARD.
I AM.

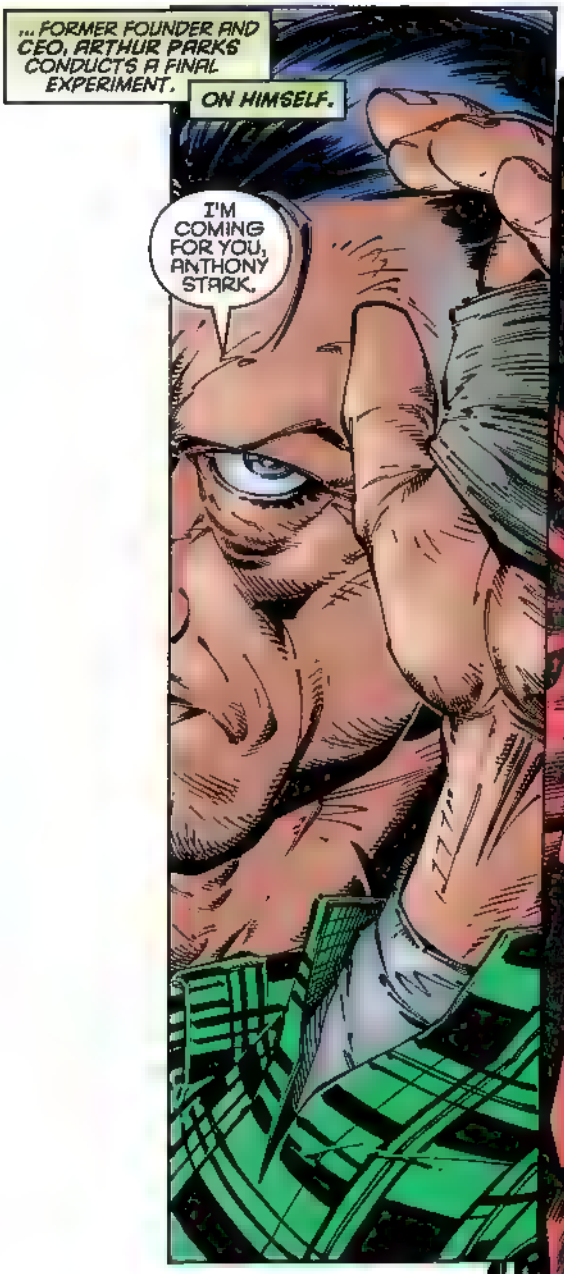

IN FACT, IRON MAN... WHY DON'T YOU GO INTO THE OTHER ROOM AND TELL Mr. STARK THAT HE HAS VISITORS?
I'LL BE BACK.

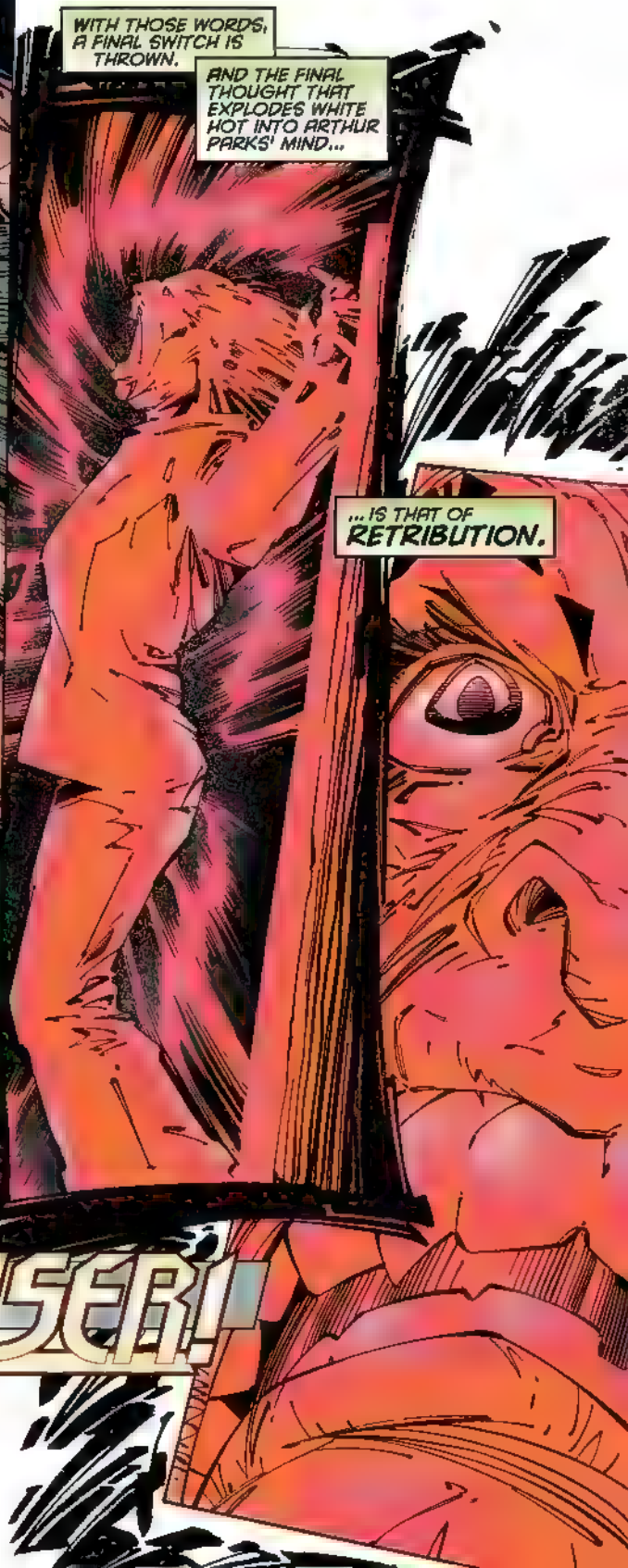
YO, TONY -- YOU STILL HERE?

SO... CAN I GET ANYONE SOMETHING TO DRINK?

MOMENTS LATER...
REED, BEN... IT'S BEEN AGES.
YER LOOKIN' GOOD FER A FELLA WHO'S MISSIN' IN ACTION.
I OWE IT ALL TO IRON MAN.
THE MOMENT THAT GREEN-SKINNED HULK ARRIVED AT MY BUFFALO FACILITY --
-- IRON MAN ENSURED I WAS SAFE BEFORE THINGS GOT OUT OF HAND.
I WAS JUST ABOUT TO DEBRIEF HIM WHEN YOU ARRIVED.
SOUNDS LIKE YOU HAVE EVERY-THING UNDER CONTROL, TONY.
IN A WAY --
-- FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME --
-- I FEEL LIKE I DO, REED.
IF THAT'S TRUE, OLD FRIEND...
... THEN I'M HAPPY FOR YOU.

UPSTATE NEW YORK... AGAIN.
IN THE ALL BUT ABANDONED COMPLEX WHICH ONCE BELONGED TO PARKS FIBREOPTICS --
-- BEFORE THE COMPANY WAS BOUGHT AND SOLD BY STARK INTERNATIONAL...




WITH THOSE WORDS, A FINAL SWITCH IS THROWN.
AND THE FINAL THOUGHT THAT EXPLODES WHITE HOT INTO ARTHUR PARKS' MIND...
...IS THAT OF RETRIBUTION.

Next Issue:

THE I.V.I.N.G. LASER!

MARVEL COMICS
IRON MAN
FEB '97
9
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
LOBDELL
LEE
BENJAMIN
CRAWFORD
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Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN!
SCOTT LOBDELL & JIM LEE Story
RYAN BENJAMIN Pencils
SALEEM CRAWFORD Inks
JOE CHIODO & MARTIN JIMENEZ Colors
WILDSTORM FX Computer Colors
RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT/AD Letters
MIKE HEISLER Editor
BOB HARRAS Chief
BRING ME THE HEAD OF THE HULK!

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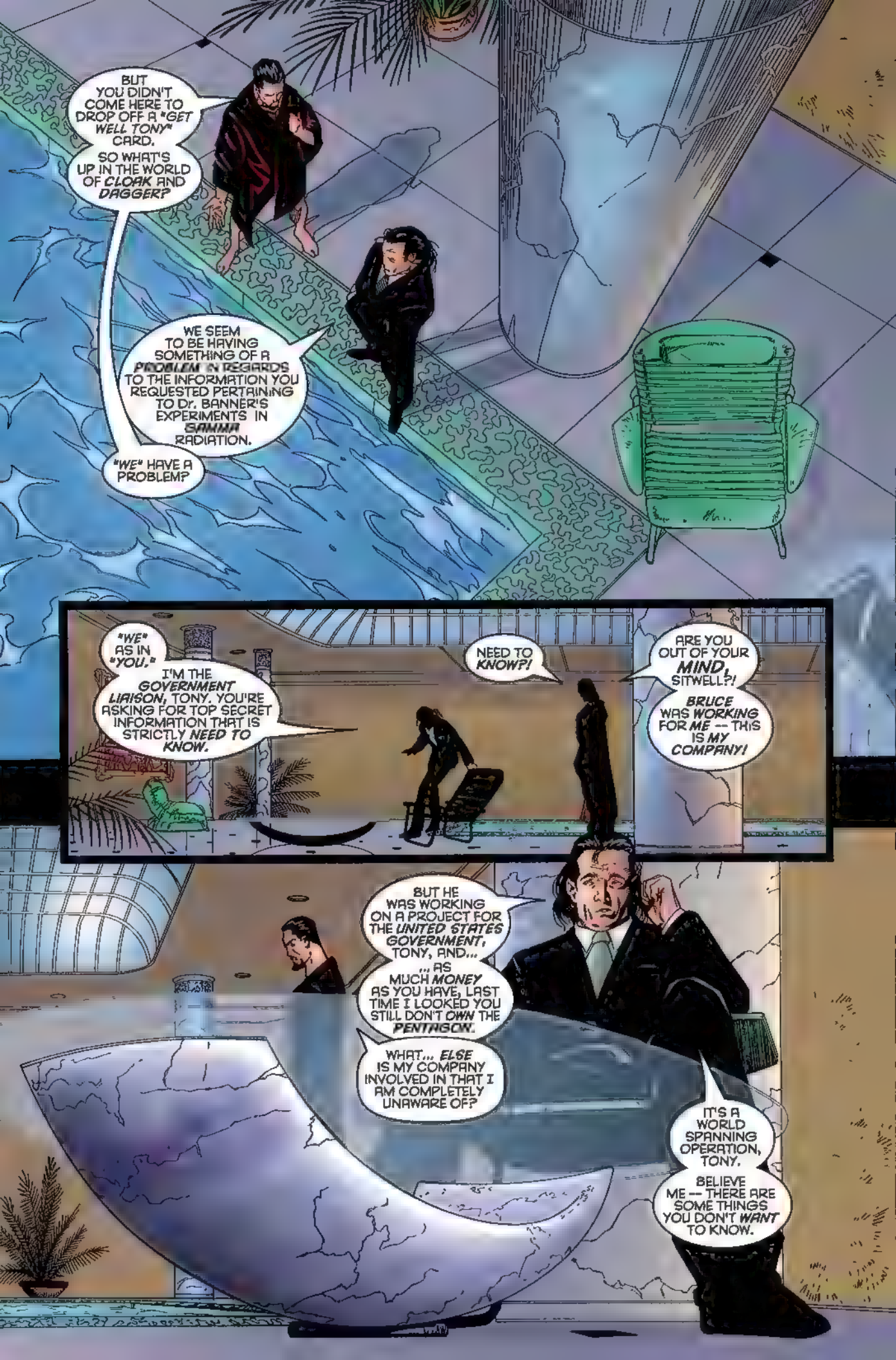
DAD, PLEASE.
YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE YOURSELF ANOTHER HEART ATTACK BEFORE WE GET YOU A DONOR.
GOOD!
I WELCOME IT!
I'D RATHER BE SPINNING IN MY GRAVE INSTEAD OF WASTING AWAY IN A HOSPITAL BED...
... WHILE SOME -- SOME MONSTER -- MAKES A MOCKERY OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT!
DON'T TAKE IT SO PERSONALLY, DAD.
IT IS PERSONAL, LIZ! THIS "INCREDIBLE HULK" IS STOMPING HIS WAY ACROSS MY COUNTRY!
YOU CAN BET IF I WASN'T ON S.C.K LEAVE --
BUT YOU ARE.
-- CHIEF OF STAFF "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS WOULD HAVE THIS MONSTER BAGGED AND TAGGED BY NOW!
NO ONE DOUBTS THAT, DADDY.
BUT THE ONLY WAY THAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IS IF YOU TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.
AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO STAY AND HELP --
MWIK
YOU'RE LEAVING?
-- I HAVE TO GET BACK TO WORK.

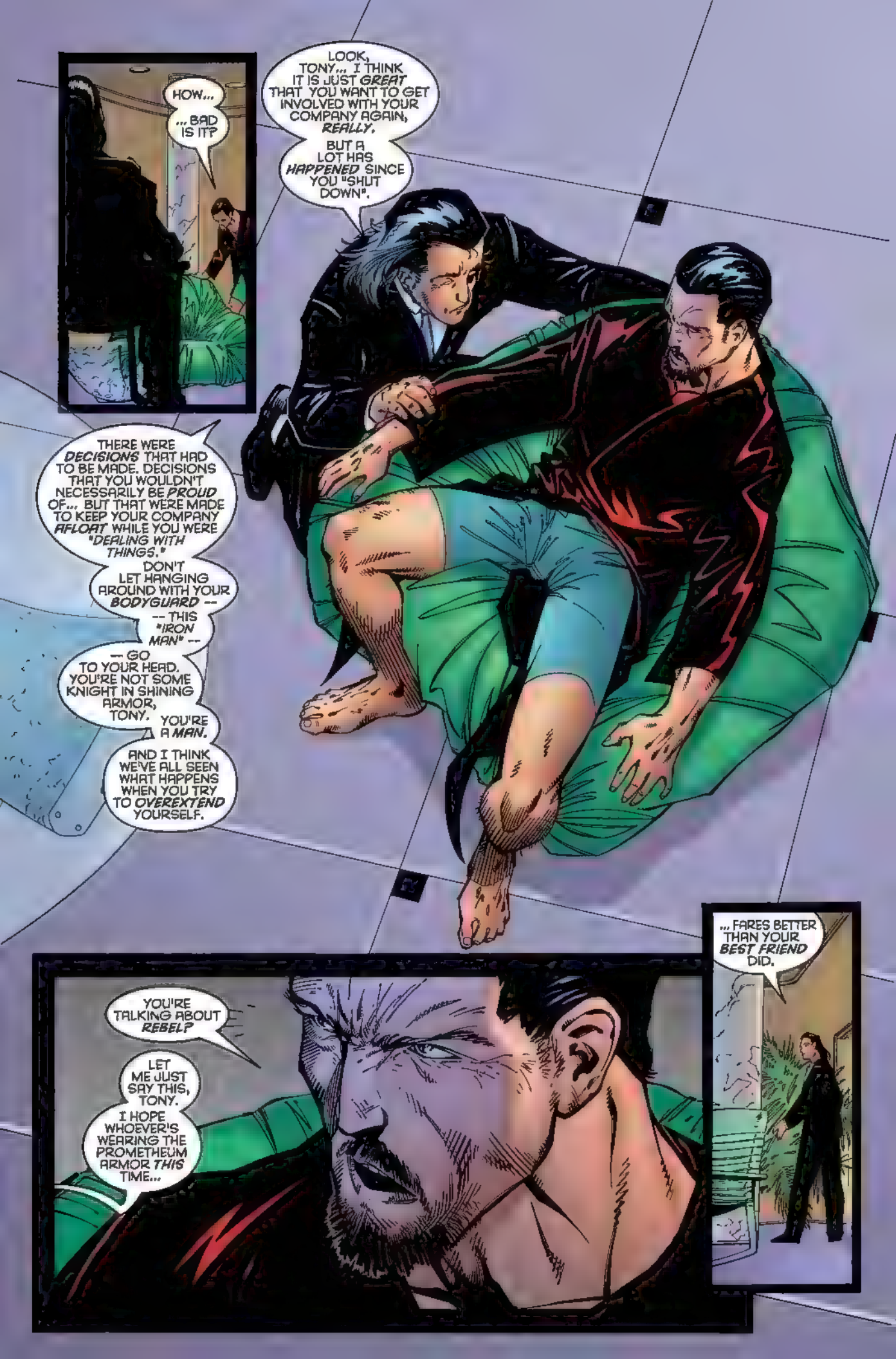
EXIT
I HATE SEEING DADDY LIKE THAT.
IN ONE WAY, IT'S NICE THAT HE'S GOT SOME FIRE STILL BURNING IN HIS GUT —
-- BUT I HATE SEEING HIM SO... SO HELPLESS.
THE WORST PART OF IT IS, I HAVE MORE TO DO WITH HIS FRUSTRATIONS OVER THE HULK THAN HE REALIZES.
I WAS THERE WHEN THAT MONSTER FIRST APPEARED AT STARK INTERNATIONAL.*
AS HEAD OF SECURITY AT S.I., IT MEANS THE HULK HAPPENED ON MY WATCH.
see IRON MAN #1-3. --Metallic Mike.
IF WHAT I SUSPECT IS TRUE, I HAVE A LOT TO MAKE UP FOR...
... AND PRECIOUS LITTLE TIME TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT I NEED TO DO.
THE CREATION OF THE HULK --
-- AND THE DEATH OF BRUCE BANNER...
... ON THE SAME NIGHT?

MILES AWAY...
...AND MILES BELOW THE CITY STREETS OF MANHATTAN...
SBRUNCH
OKAY.
SKRAP
SO IT'S NOT THE BEST USE OF MY TIME OR RESOURCES —
FROOM
— IT'S MY OWN PERSONAL VERSION OF LETTING OFF STEAM.
USING THE PROMETHEUM ARMOR TO CARVE SOMETHING OF AN ARMORY...
...OUT OF SEVERAL TONS OF —
SPLTANG
URMPH!
— BEDROCK?

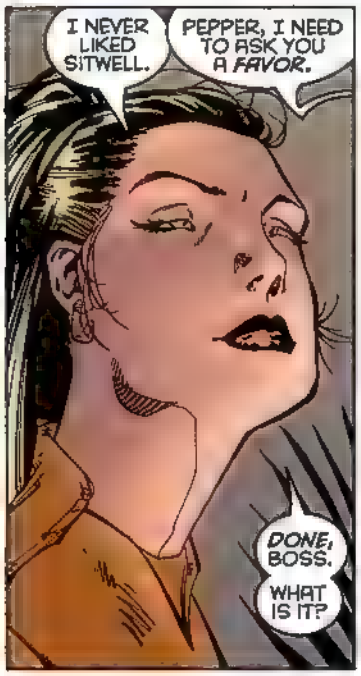
ARE YOU TALKING TO ME, MISTER STARK?
PEPPER?!
UM... SURE. OF COURSE, I'M TALKING TO YOU.
GOOD.
I WAS NERVOUS FOR YOU.
FOR THE RECORD, YOU'RE WANTED "UPSTAIRS".
MISTER SITWELL IS WAITING FOR YOU UP AT THE POOL.
P.S. HE DOESN'T LOOK HAPPY.
GOOD.
HE'S NOT SUPPOSED TO.
BRRRR.
IF I MAY, SIR..?
MS. POTTS?
THE WAY I UNDERSTAND IT, THE "ARMOR" YOU'RE WEARING IS KEEPING YOU ALIVE... KEEPING YOUR HEART PUMPING?
CORRECT.
SO THEN WHY ARE YOU SPENDING YOUR ENERGY DOWN THERE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
CREATING, PEPPER.
FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A VERY LONG TIME
I'M CREATING.

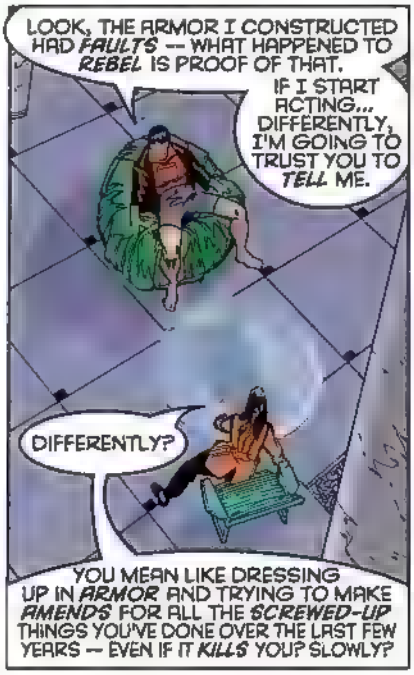
STRAIGHT UP...
BUT TO BE HONEST WITH MYSELF -- SO FAR THE ONLY THING I'VE CREATED...
... IS THIS THERMAL SILO THAT'LL ALLOW ME TO TRAVEL FROM THE ARMORY TO MY PENTHOUSE UNDETECTED.
"UNDETECTED".
LISTEN TO ME.
I'M STARTING TO SOUND PARANOID. WHICH IS FAIR, SEEING AS NO ONE LIKES ME.
NOT THAT I BLAME THEM.
JUST WISH I COULD HIDE THE REST OF MY PROBLEMS AS EASILY.
IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, I'VE DONE A LOT OF THINGS I'M NOT PROUD OF.
OF COURSE, NOW, IT'S AS IF I'M PAYING A PRICE FOR ALL OF IT --
TONY?
DID I WAKE YOU UP?
IN A WORD -- YES.
I GUESS I HAVEN'T QUITE RECOVERED FROM THAT HELICOPTER CRASH, JASPER.
IT WAS ONLY LUCK THAT THAT SHRAPNEL WENT STRAIGHT THROUGH ME.
LUCK.
-- TRAPPED IN THIS CHEST PLATE THAT'S KEEPING MY HEART GOING.
ARMOR'S AUTOCLOAK STILL WORKING FINE.


BUT YOU DIDN'T COME HERE TO DROP OFF A "GET WELL TONY" CARD.
SO WHAT'S UP IN THE WORLD OF CLOAK AND DAGGER?
WE SEEM TO BE HAVING SOMETHING OF A PROBLEM IN REGARDS TO THE INFORMATION YOU REQUESTED PERTAINING TO Dr. BANNER'S EXPERIMENTS IN GAMMA RADIATION.
"WE" HAVE A PROBLEM?
"WE" AS IN "YOU."
I'M THE GOVERNMENT LIAISON, TONY. YOU'RE ASKING FOR TOP SECRET INFORMATION THAT IS STRICTLY NEED TO KNOW.
NEED TO KNOW?!
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND, SITWELL?!
BRUCE WAS WORKING FOR ME -- THIS IS MY COMPANY!
BUT HE WAS WORKING ON A PROJECT FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, TONY, AND...
... AS MUCH MONEY AS YOU HAVE, LAST TIME I LOOKED YOU STILL DON'T OWN THE PENTAGON.
WHAT... ELSE IS MY COMPANY INVOLVED IN THAT I AM COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF?
IT'S A WORLD SPANNING OPERATION, TONY.
BELIEVE ME -- THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW.


HOW...
... BAD IS IT?
LOOK, TONY... I THINK IT IS JUST *GREAT* THAT YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR COMPANY AGAIN, *REALLY*.
BUT A LOT HAS *HAPPENED* SINCE YOU "SHUT DOWN".
THERE WERE *DECISIONS* THAT HAD TO BE MADE. DECISIONS THAT YOU WOULDN'T NECESSARILY BE *PROUD* OF... BUT THAT WERE MADE TO KEEP YOUR COMPANY *AFLOAT* WHILE YOU WERE *"DEALING WITH THINGS."*
DON'T LET HANGING AROUND WITH YOUR *BODYGUARD* --
-- THIS *"IRON MAN"* --
-- GO TO YOUR HEAD. YOU'RE NOT SOME KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR, TONY.
YOU'RE A *MAN*.
AND I THINK WE'VE ALL SEEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TRY TO *OVEREXTEND* YOURSELF.
... FARES BETTER THAN YOUR *BEST FRIEND* DID.
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT *REBEL*?
LET ME JUST SAY THIS, TONY.
I HOPE WHOEVER'S WEARING THE PROMETHEUM ARMOR *THIS* TIME...

CHEAP SHOT.
OR *WAS* IT?
MAYBE HE'S RIGHT. MORE RIGHT THAN HE REALIZES.
IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, I'M A *TINKERER*. A *FIXER*.
I'M A GUY WHO *DOESN'T* KNOW WHEN TO LEAVE THINGS *ALONE*.
MAYBE -- INSTEAD OF *PUSHING* THE *ENVELOPE* ON THIS WHOLE *IRON MAN* SCENARIO...
...I SHOULD PACK IT IN BEFORE SOMEONE... BEFORE ANYONE *ELSE*... GETS HURT.


I NEVER LIKED SITWELL.
PEPPER, I NEED TO ASK YOU A *FAVOR*.
DONE, BOSS.
WHAT IS IT?


LOOK, THE ARMOR I CONSTRUCTED HAD *FAULTS* -- WHAT HAPPENED TO *REBEL* IS PROOF OF THAT.
IF I START ACTING... DIFFERENTLY, I'M GOING TO TRUST YOU TO *TELL* ME.
DIFFERENTLY?
YOU MEAN LIKE DRESSING UP IN *ARMOR* AND TRYING TO MAKE *AMENDS* FOR ALL THE *SCREWED-UP* THINGS YOU'VE DONE OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS -- EVEN IF IT *KILLS* YOU? SLOWLY?

ACTUALLY, YES, SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
HAVE I *FIRED* YOU YET TODAY?

MISTER STARK?
THIS IS YOUR NEXT APPOINTMENT, MISTER STARK.
I *TOLD* HIM TO WAIT IN THE LOBBY BUT --
NO PROBLEM, Ms. POTTS.
I'VE ACTUALLY BEEN LOOKING *FORWARD* TO MEETING WITH Dr. PARKS.
IT'S *BEEN* A WHILE, ARTHUR.
DON'T KID YOURSELF, STARK.
IT'S BEEN A *LIFE-TIME.*
TAKE A SEAT.
THIS MIGHT SOUND *ODD* TO YOU, AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED -- THE BUYOUTS, THE LAW-SUITS, THE TRIAL -- BUT I FEEL I HAVE A LOT TO *EXPLAIN* TO YOU.
YOU SEE, I'VE BEEN IN SOMETHING OF A *FUNK* THE PAST FEW YEARS, AND --

A FUNK?!
YOU DESTROYED ME -- MY COMPANY! YOU RUINED THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE WHO DEPENDED ON PARKS FIBREOPTICS WHEN YOU BOUGHT IT AND SOLD IT OFF!
I UNDERSTAND THAT, NOW.
AND FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH --
"FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH?!"
HOW DARE YOU, STARK -- HOW DARE YOU?!
BRO MAN
AS A MULTI-BILLIONAIRE, YOU'RE WORTH A LOT! BUT AS A PERSON -- AS A HUMAN BEING -- YOU'RE WORTHLESS!
WHEN I SOLD MY COMPANY TO STARK INTERNATIONAL, YOU PROMISED ME THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT -- THAT I WAS IMPORTANT WHEN YOU BOUGHT IT!
YOU LIED -- YOU CHEATED -- YOU BROKE YOUR WORD... NOT ONLY TO ME, BUT TO ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WORKED FOR ME --!
YOU KILLED PEOPLE'S DREAMS, STARK!
AND YOU'RE GOING TO STAND THERE AND TELL ME IT'S BECAUSE YOU WERE IN A FUNK?!

PARKS -- YOUR EYES? WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU..?
TO ME..? NOT A THING.
THIS ISN'T ABOUT *ME, STARK!*
IT'S ABOUT *YOU* -- ABOUT YOU *PAYING* FOR YOUR CRIMES!
DO YOU BEGIN TO SEE NOW...
... HOW *STUPID* YOU WERE?!
TO *YOU*, PARKS FIBREOPTICS WAS JUST A *SERIES* OF *BUILDINGS*...
... A *SET* OF NUMBERS IN YOUR *BUSINESS* LEDGER!
BUT BEFORE YOU *BOUGHT* ME... I WAS WORKING ON *CHANNELING* FIBER-OPTICS THROUGH A HUMAN *NERVOUS SYSTEM!*
AS I'VE SAID, THIS ISN'T ABOUT *ME!*
IN ORDER TO EXACT MY POUND OF FLESH FROM YOU... *ARTHUR PARKS* HAD TO *DIE* --

-- SO THE IRONGLASER COULD DESTROY YOU!
AND I THOUGHT "IRON MAN" WAS A SILLY NAME!
NO TIME FOR JOKES, TONY -- I'VE GOT TO GET COVER, MARGINAL THOUGH IT MIGHT BE!
THAT'S IT, STARK -- RUN! DROWN LIKE THE FRIGHTENED FILTHY RAT YOU ARE!
DO YOU ENJOY FEELING HELPLESS?
TELL ME -- DO YOU UNDERSTAND NOW HOW I FELT WHEN THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO TO PREVENT YOU FROM HURTING ALL THOSE PEOPLE?!

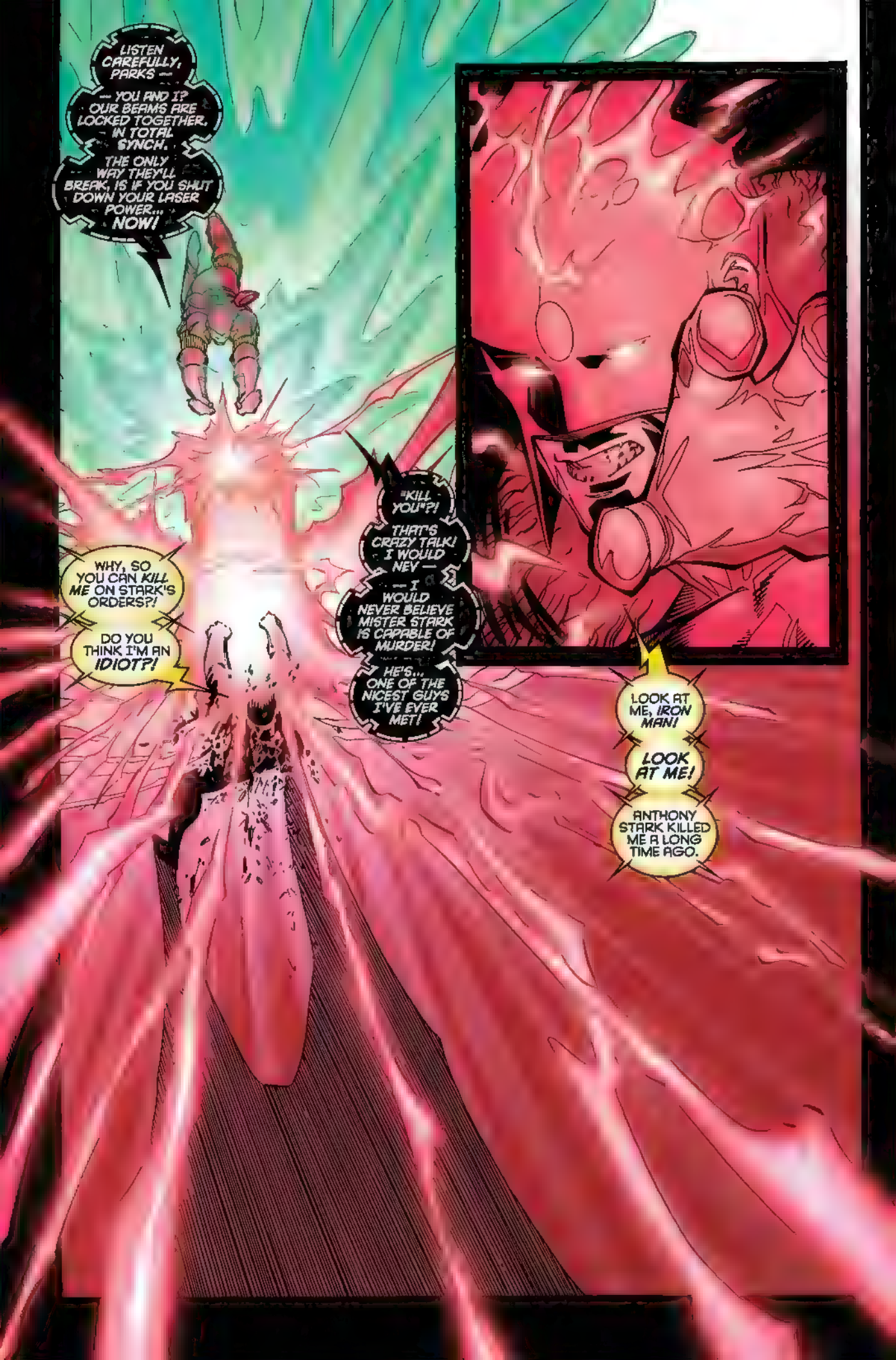
SPLOSH
OKAY, TONY -- THINK!
THE WATER ISN'T GOING TO DO ANYTHING TO PROTECT ME FROM THOSE LASERS.
FIRST THINGS FIRST --
KLIK
-- USE THE CHESTPLATE TO MAGNETICALLY ATTRACT THE REST OF THE PROMETHEUM ARMOR.
WHA --?!
SPTANG
SKRASH
SPLOSH
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE PLANNING, STARK --
-- BUT IT'S TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE!
CAN YOU FEEL THAT?!
I'M BRINGING THE WATER TO A BOIL -- SO THAT YOU BURN!
DIE, STARK!
DIE!
DIE!

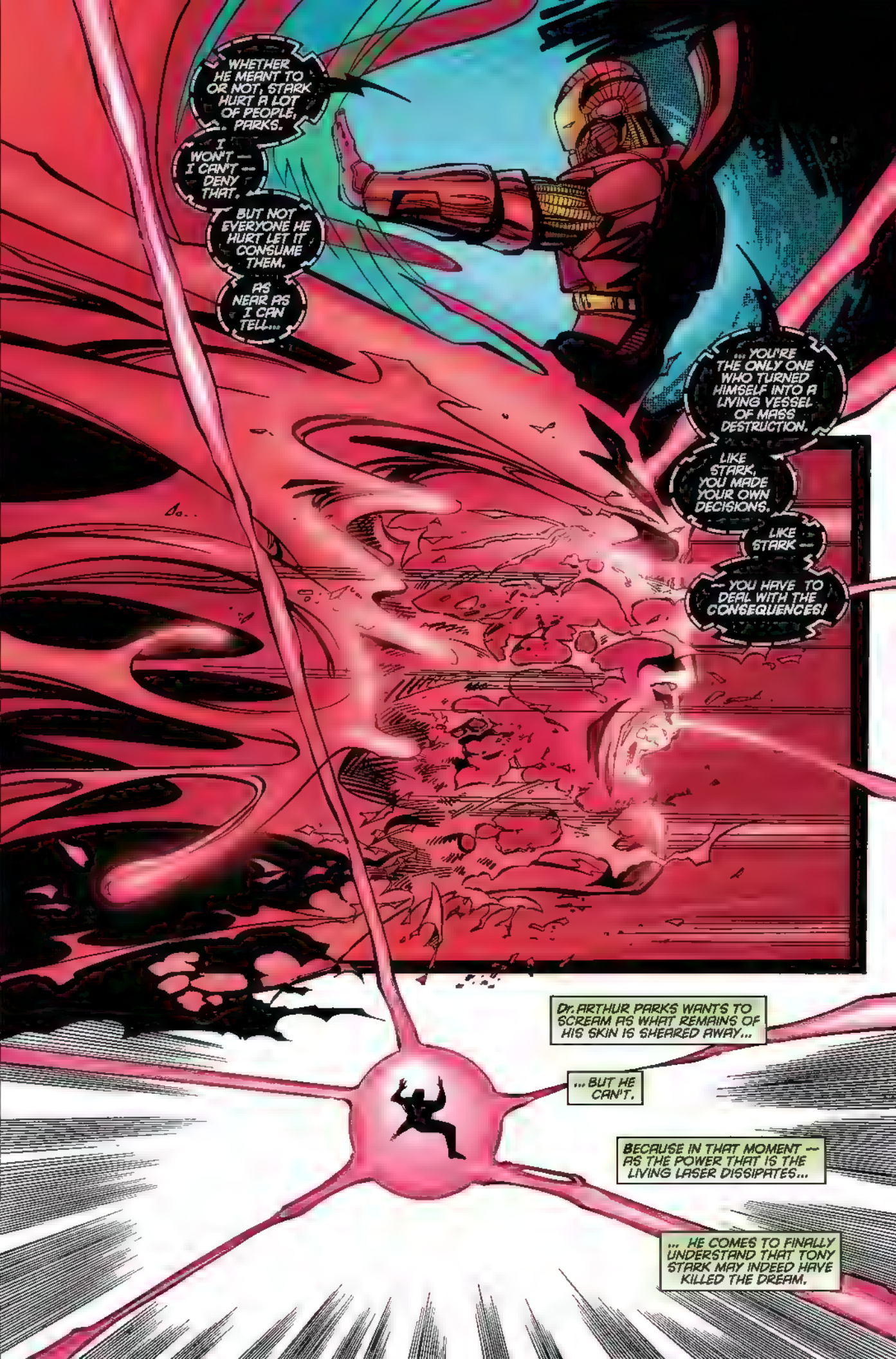
BAD. MOVE.
?!

295 PARK AVENUE SOUTH...
RING RING
RI KLIK
YOU HAVE REACHED THE OFFICE OF DOCTOR LEONARD SAMSON.
PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE AT THE SOUND OF THE BEEP, AND I'LL RETURN YOUR CALL. THANK YOU.
BEEP
...
LEN?
Hmp?
PLEASE BE THERE, LEN.
BRUCE?
YEAH, LEN... IT'S ME.
AND I NEED YOUR HELP.
BRUCE, YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD.
DEAR GOD... I ONLY WISH THAT WERE THE CASE.
See AVENGERS #'s 485 for more about Bruce Banner a.k.a. the Incredible Hulk -- Metallic Mike

IS THAT SUIT OF ARMOR SUPPOSED TO IMPRESS ME?!
THAT'S SOMETHING YOU WEAR! BUT ME --?!
I BECAME THE LIVING LASER!
MY POWER ISN'T SOMETHING TO BE WORN -- SOMETHING TO BE TAKEN OFF AT THE END OF THE DAY!
LOOOSE
I CAN FEEL THE HEAT FROM THE LASER BLAST --
-- RIGHT THROUGH THE ARMOR!
HOW LONG BEFORE IT BURNS THROUGH COMPLETELY?!
WHAM
LOOK, WHOEVER YOU ARE IN THERE...
... DON'T THROW YOUR LIFE AWAY ON ACCOUNT OF STARK.
HE'S NOT WORTH IT.

ACTUALLY...
...I'M QUITE FOND OF HIM MYSELF.
THIS IS THE PROB_EM WITH PROTOTYPES: THIS LIGHT REFRACTION PULSE HAS NEVER BEEN TESTED.
NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT IT DRAWS A *TON* OF ENERGY FROM THE CHESTPLATE. WHICH MEANS --
-- THIS HAS JUST BECOME A *WAITING* GAME.
WHAT'S GOING TO GIVE OUT FIRST..?
PARKS'S INTERNAL POWER SUPPLY -- OR MY *HEART?*
WHA--?!
THAT ENERGY FIELD... IT'S DIFFUSING MY LASER BLAST?!
WOW.
YOUSE DON'T MISS NUTHIN'.
YOUSE MUSTA BEEN THE *SMARTEST* KID IN YER CLASS.


LISTEN CAREFULLY, PARKS —
— YOU AND I? OUR BEAMS ARE LOCKED TOGETHER, IN TOTAL SYNCH.
THE ONLY WAY THEY'LL BREAK, IS IF YOU SHUT DOWN YOUR LASER POWER... NOW!
WHY, SO YOU CAN *KILL ME* ON STARK'S ORDERS?!
DO YOU THINK I'M AN *IDIOT*?!
"KILL YOU"?!
THAT'S CRAZY TALK! I WOULD NEV —
— I WOULD NEVER BELIEVE MISTER STARK IS CAPABLE OF MURDER!
HE'S... ONE OF THE NICEST GUYS I'VE EVER MET!
LOOK AT ME, *IRON MAN!*
LOOK AT ME!
ANTHONY STARK KILLED ME A LONG TIME AGO.


WHETHER HE MEANT TO OR NOT, STARK HURT A LOT OF PEOPLE, PARKS.
I WON'T -- I CAN'T -- DENY THAT.
BUT NOT EVERYONE HE HURT LET IT CONSUME THEM.
AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL...
... YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO TURNED HIMSELF INTO A LIVING VESSEL OF MASS DESTRUCTION.
LIKE STARK, YOU MADE YOUR OWN DECISIONS.
LIKE STARK --
-- YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE CONSEQUENCES!
Dr. ARTHUR PARKS WANTS TO SCREAM AS WHAT REMAINS OF HIS SKIN IS SHEARED AWAY...
... BUT HE CAN'T.
BECAUSE IN THAT MOMENT -- AS THE POWER THAT IS THE LIVING LASER DISSIPATES...
... HE COMES TO FINALLY UNDERSTAND THAT TONY STARK MAY INDEED HAVE KILLED THE DREAM.

BUT IT WAS ARTHUR PARKS WHO KILLED THE MAN.
YOUR WIFE.
YOUR BODY.
YOUR HUMANITY.
WAS IT WORTH IT, ARTHUR?
WAS IT WORTH IT?
ARE YOU ASKING ME IF I'D DO IT AGAIN?
YES.
AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN...
... UNTIL ANTHONY STARK — AND ANYTHING HE EVER LOVED... IS DEAD.

#39 BELLEW AVENUE, EASTCHESTER.
THE APARTMENT OF PEPPER POTTS.
I DON'T WANT TO GET MY HOPES UP... BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THIS WHOLE "IRON MAN" GIG HAS BEEN GOOD FOR Mr. STARK.
IT SOUNDS SILLY, BUT -- IT'S ALMOST AS IF BEING TRAPPED IN THAT ARMOR IS HELPING HIM COME OUT OF HIS SHELL.
WHA --? THE DOOR IS OPEN.
SOMEONE'S INSIDE?!
"ORGANIC EGGS" -- WHAT THE HECK DOES THAT MEAN?
WH-WHO ARE YOU? HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?
WHIRLWIND.
I USED THE DOOR.
YOU GOT ANYTHING TO EAT AROUND HERE?
I'D HATE TO HAVE TO KILL YOU ON AN EMPTY STOMACH.
NEXT: WHIRLWIND VS... TONY STARK?!
That's Right, it's the Brilliance of TONY STARK vs. the savagery of WHIRLWIND when STARK isn't able to access his armor in a story we don't DARE call "Armor, Armor Everywhere... not a Stitch to Wear!"

MARVEL COMICS
IRON MAN
MAR 97 5
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
LOBDELL
LEE
BENJAMIN
CRAWFORD
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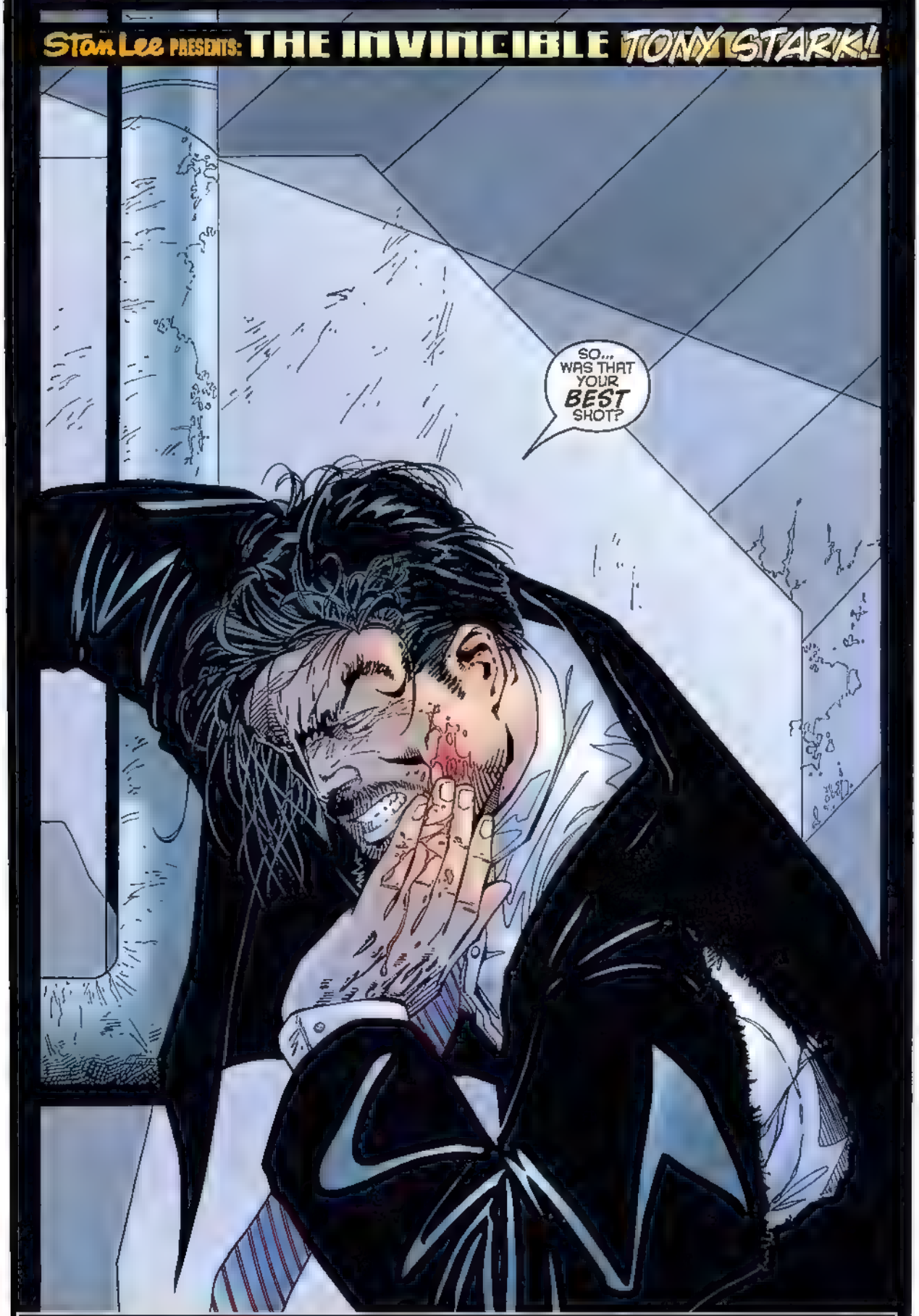
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE INVINCIBLE TONY STARK!



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TOUGH TALK, STARK...
FOR A DEAD MAN!
HEY, KNOCK IT OFF!
HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS?
YOU JUST STOLE MY LINE, CANNON.
NOW, IF I WANT TO MAKE SOME WITTY REJOINDER, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE UP MY OWN CLICHÉ.
YOU BETTER HURRY, THEN, 'CAUSE IN A SECOND... YOU'RE GONNA BE...
?!
YOU CALLED ME CANNON, INSTEAD OF WHIRLWIND.
DAVE CANNON.
FORMERLY, THE HUMAN TOP.
FORMERLY, CHARLES MATTHEWS.
BORN IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI.
CURRENTLY LIVING IN --

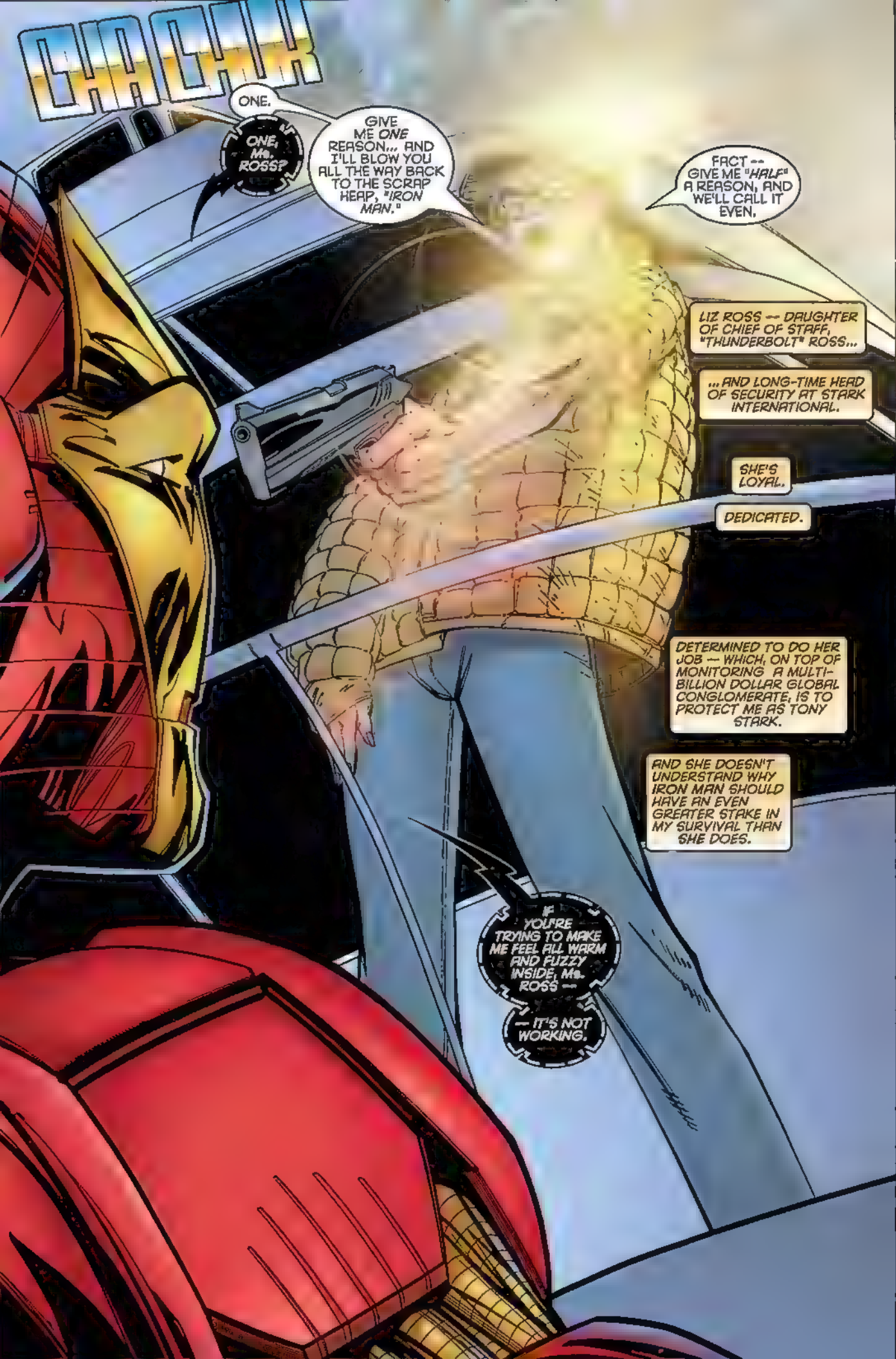
INHERIT THE WHIRLWIND

SCOTT LOBDELL & JIM LEE STORY RYAN BENJAMIN PENCILS
SALEEM CRAWFORD WITH JD & TOM MCWEENY INKS
JOE CHIODO & MARTIN JIMENEZ COLORS WILDSTORM FX COMPUTER COLORS

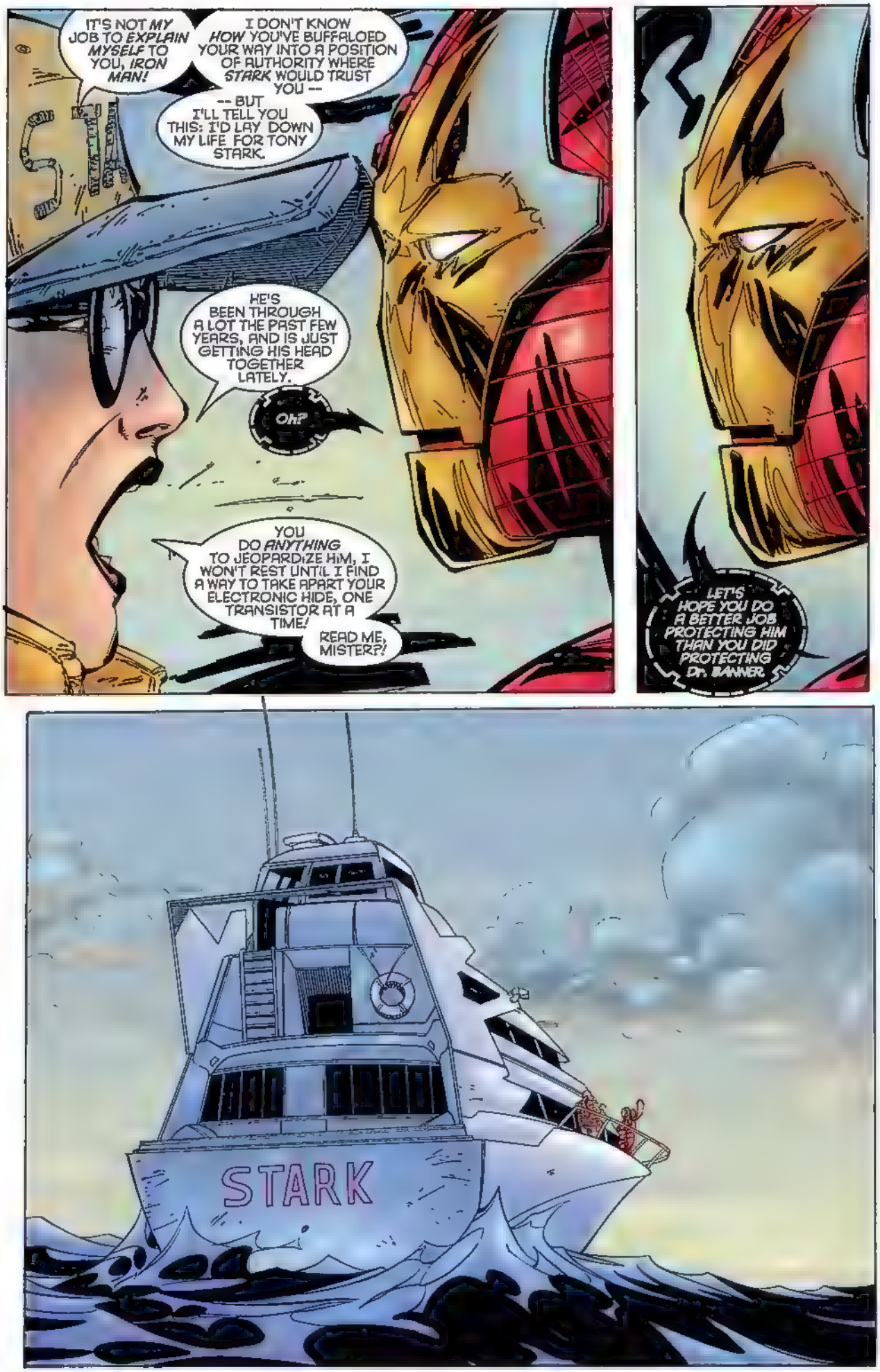
I MAKE IT A HABIT TO LEARN EVERYTHING I CAN ABOUT THE HIRED ASSASSINS THAT ARE SENT TO KILL ME.
MY THERAPIST TELLS ME I'M A CONTROL FREAK.
ME?
I JUST FIND IT'S EASIER WHEN I HAVE TO GET REVENGE AFTERWARDS.
LISTEN TO YOURSELF, TONY -- YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'RE PLAYING HARDBALL IN THE BOARDROOM...
... INSTEAD OF SQUARING OFF WITH SOMEONE CAPABLE OF SLICING AND DICING YOU TO RIBBONS!
IF THERE'S ANY QUESTION I NEED ANSWERED --

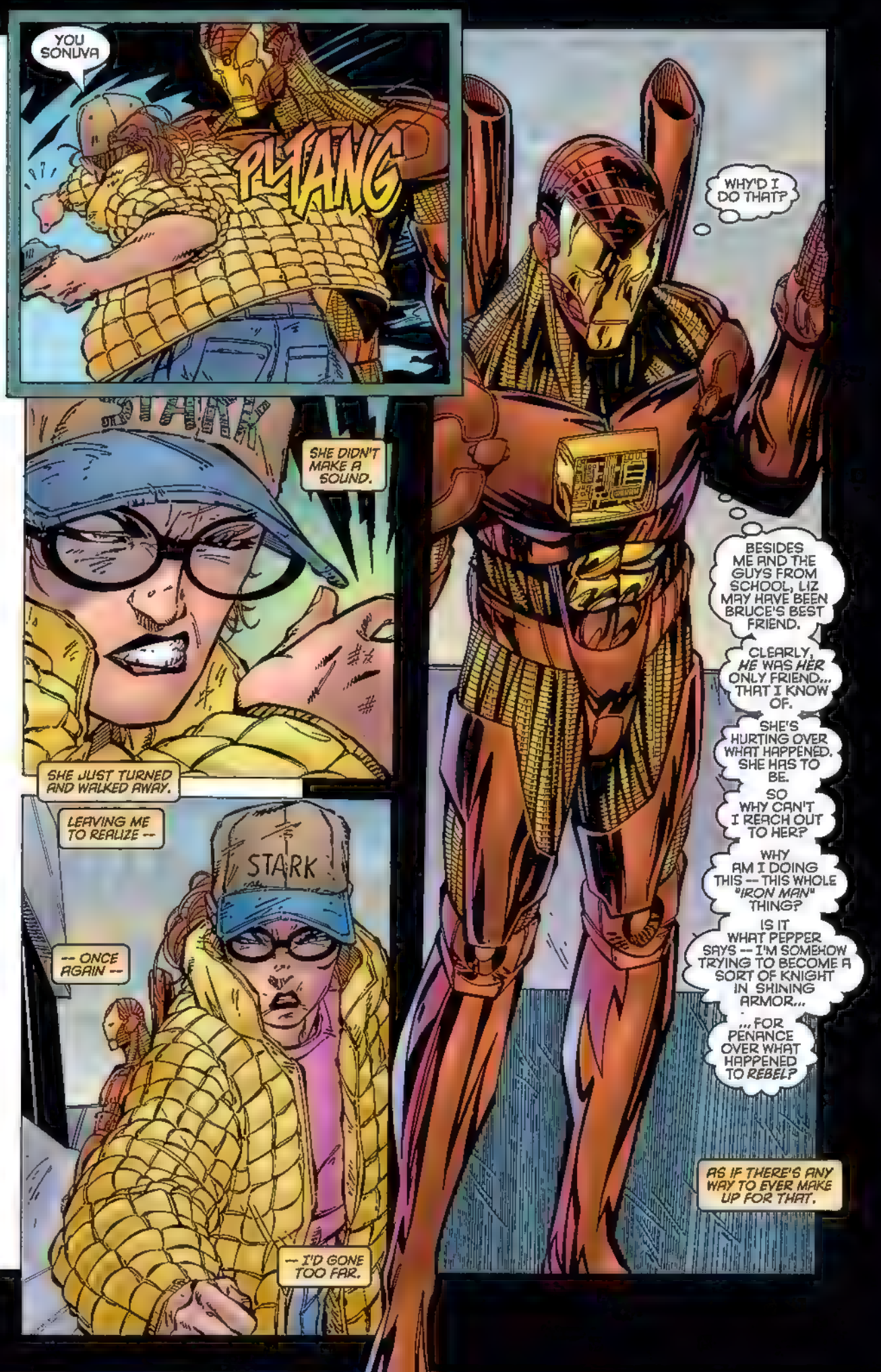
RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT'S ALBERT DESCHESNE LETTERS
MIKE HEISLER EDITOR BOB HARRAS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

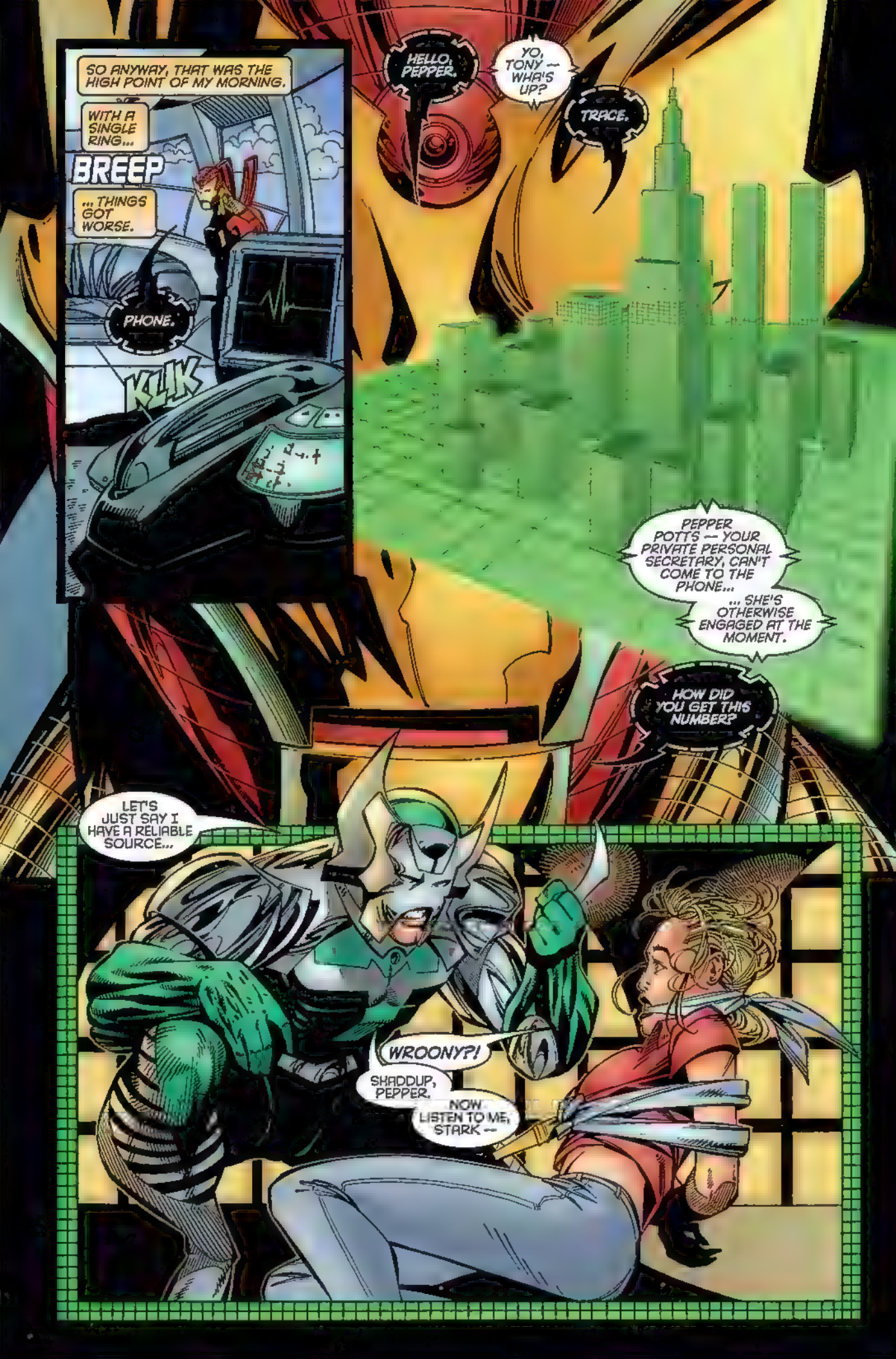
-- IT'S HOW DID I GET MYSELF INTO THIS SITUATION IN THE FIRST PLACE?
"DISCONCERTING" IS THE WORD THAT POPS TO MIND.
AFTER OUR BATTLE, I REALIZED THAT IF I'D LIVED THROUGH IT, THEN THIS "HULK" THING MIGHT HAVE AS WELL.
FOR NEARLY A HUNDRED MILES, I'VE TRACKED THE MONSTER'S MASSIVE FOOTPRINTS ALONG THE RIVER-BED...
... ONLY TO HAVE THEM... STOP?
THE DAY STARTED OUT SIMPLE ENOUGH.
THOUGH IT'S A PRETTY SCARY THOUGHT WHEN I START THINKING THAT BEING DECKED OUT IN FULL PROMETHEUM ARMOR --
-- AND SCOURING THE BOTTOM OF THE HUDSON RIVER FOR CLUES TO THE FATE OF THE HULK* --
-- SHOULD QUALIFY AS ANYTHING REMOTELY RESEMBLING 'SIMPLE'.
YEAH, DISCONCERTING.
SPLOOSH
THAT'S THE PERFECT WORD.
*IRON MAN LAST BATTLED HULK IN IRON MAN #2 -- Full Metal Mike.


CHACHK
ONE.
ONE, Ms. ROSS?
GIVE ME ONE REASON... AND I'LL BLOW YOU ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE SCRAP HEAP, "IRON MAN."
FACT -- GIVE ME "HALF" A REASON, AND WE'LL CALL IT EVEN.
LIZ ROSS -- DAUGHTER OF CHIEF OF STAFF, "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS...
...AND LONG-TIME HEAD OF SECURITY AT STARK INTERNATIONAL.
SHE'S LOYAL.
DEDICATED.
DETERMINED TO DO HER JOB -- WHICH, ON TOP OF MONITORING A MULTI-BILLION DOLLAR GLOBAL CONGLOMERATE, IS TO PROTECT ME AS TONY STARK.
AND SHE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WHY IRON MAN SHOULD HAVE AN EVEN GREATER STAKE IN MY SURVIVAL THAN SHE DOES.
IF YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE ME FEEL ALL WARM AND FUZZY INSIDE, Ms. ROSS --
-- IT'S NOT WORKING.

STARK
DRY.
IN THE YELLOW PAGES. UNDER "REALLY BUSY PEOPLE."
NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I --
YOU'RE WEARING THE MOST IMPRESSIVE MOBILE ARMORY/ LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM IN THE WORLD --
-- AND YOU USE IT FOR A TOWEL?
I DON'T KNOW WHERE STARK FOUND YOU...
STARK
DON'T TURN YOUR BACK ON ME, YOU TIN PLATED YUTZ!
I WON'T BE IGNORED LIKE SOME --
GUN.
THUMMMMM
KLANG
SKRUNCH
Mr. STARK ASSURES ME YOU'RE THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT YOU DO, Ms. ROSS.
A CONSUMMATE PROFESSIONAL.
I... DON'T NECESSARILY SEE IT THAT WAY.
YOU SEEM TO HAVE TAKEN MY APPOINTMENT AS HIS PERSONAL BODYGUARD... Um, PERSONALLY.

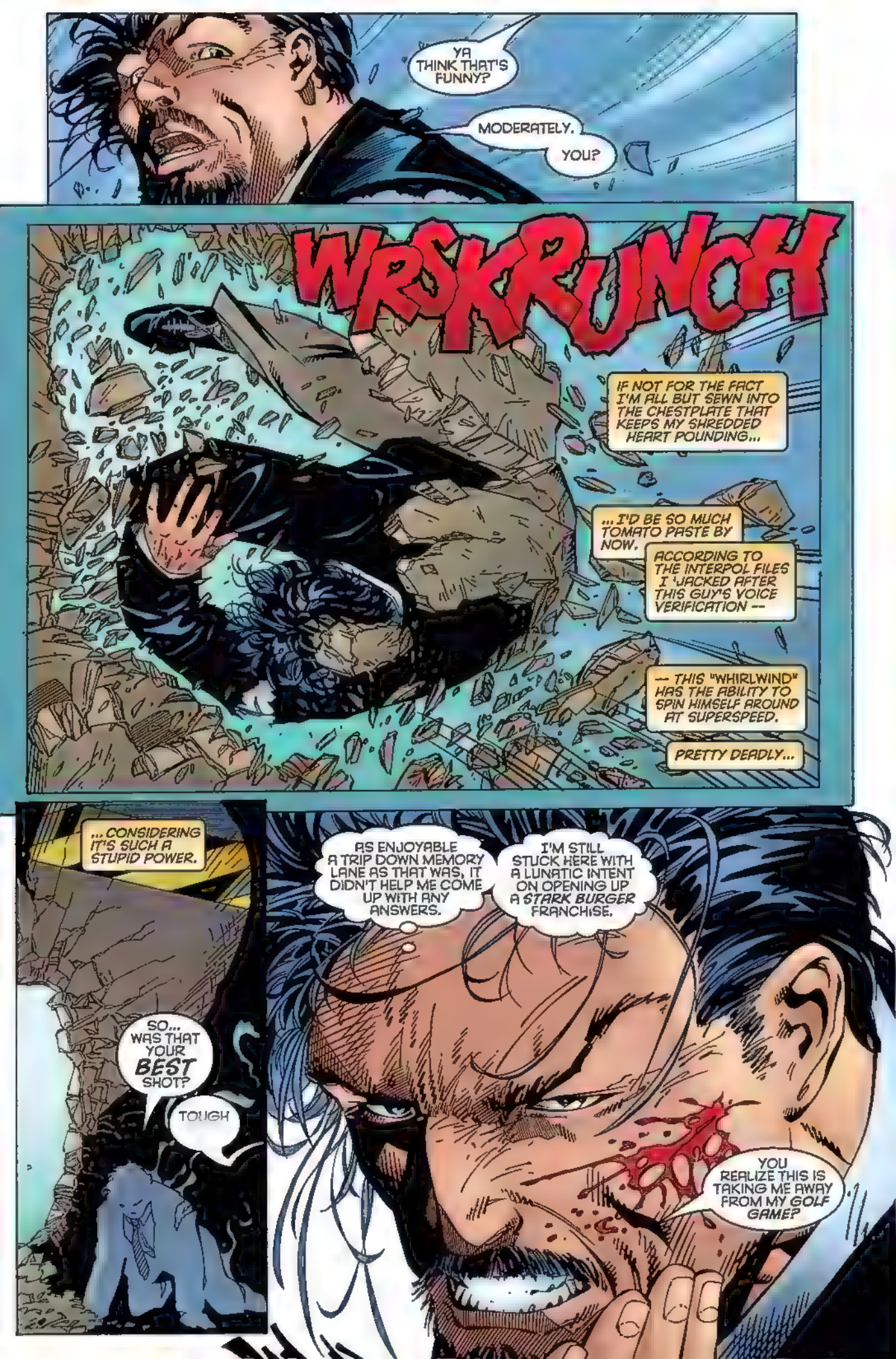

IT'S NOT MY JOB TO EXPLAIN MYSELF TO YOU, IRON MAN!
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'VE BUFFALOED YOUR WAY INTO A POSITION OF AUTHORITY WHERE STARK WOULD TRUST YOU --
-- BUT I'LL TELL YOU THIS: I'D LAY DOWN MY LIFE FOR TONY STARK.
HE'S BEEN THROUGH A LOT THE PAST FEW YEARS, AND IS JUST GETTING HIS HEAD TOGETHER LATELY.
OH?
YOU DO ANYTHING TO JEOPARDIZE HIM, I WON'T REST UNTIL I FIND A WAY TO TAKE APART YOUR ELECTRONIC HIDE, ONE TRANSISTOR AT A TIME!
READ ME, MISTER?!
LET'S HOPE YOU DO A BETTER JOB PROTECTING HIM THAN YOU DID PROTECTING Dr. BANNER.
STARK


YOU SONUVA
PLTANG
WHY'D I DO THAT?
BESIDES ME AND THE GUYS FROM SCHOOL, LIZ MAY HAVE BEEN BRUCE'S BEST FRIEND.
CLEARLY, HE WAS HER ONLY FRIEND... THAT I KNOW OF.
SHE'S HURTING OVER WHAT HAPPENED. SHE HAS TO BE.
SO WHY CAN'T I REACH OUT TO HER?
WHY AM I DOING THIS -- THIS WHOLE "IRON MAN" THING?
IS IT WHAT PEPPER SAYS -- I'M SOMEHOW TRYING TO BECOME A SORT OF KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR...
... FOR PENANCE OVER WHAT HAPPENED TO REBEL?
AS IF THERE'S ANY WAY TO EVER MAKE UP FOR THAT.
STARK
SHE DIDN'T MAKE A SOUND.
SHE JUST TURNED AND WALKED AWAY.
LEAVING ME TO REALIZE --
STARK
-- ONCE AGAIN --
-- I'D GONE TOO FAR.


SO ANYWAY, THAT WAS THE HIGH POINT OF MY MORNING.
WITH A SINGLE RING...
BREEP
... THINGS GOT WORSE.
PHONE.
KLIK
HELLO, PEPPER.
YO, TONY -- WHA'S UP?
TRACE.
PEPPER POTTS -- YOUR PRIVATE PERSONAL SECRETARY, CAN'T COME TO THE PHONE...
... SHE'S OTHERWISE ENGAGED AT THE MOMENT.
HOW DID YOU GET THIS NUMBER?
LET'S JUST SAY I HAVE A RELIABLE SOURCE...
WROONY?!
SHADDUP, PEPPER.
NOW LISTEN TO ME, STARK --

"-- IF YA WANT TO SEE THIS FRAIL IN ONE PIECE EVER AGAIN...
"... YER TDRIVE TO THE S.I. LONG ISLAND BRANCH.
"ALONE.
"AND I'LL BE WATCHING.
"FIRST SIGN OF YOUR "BODYGUARD" --
"-- THIS IRON MAN -- AND I START SENDIN' HER OUT.
"ONE SQUARE INCH AT A TIME."
FOR A MOMENT, EVERYTHING SEEMED TO BE FINE...

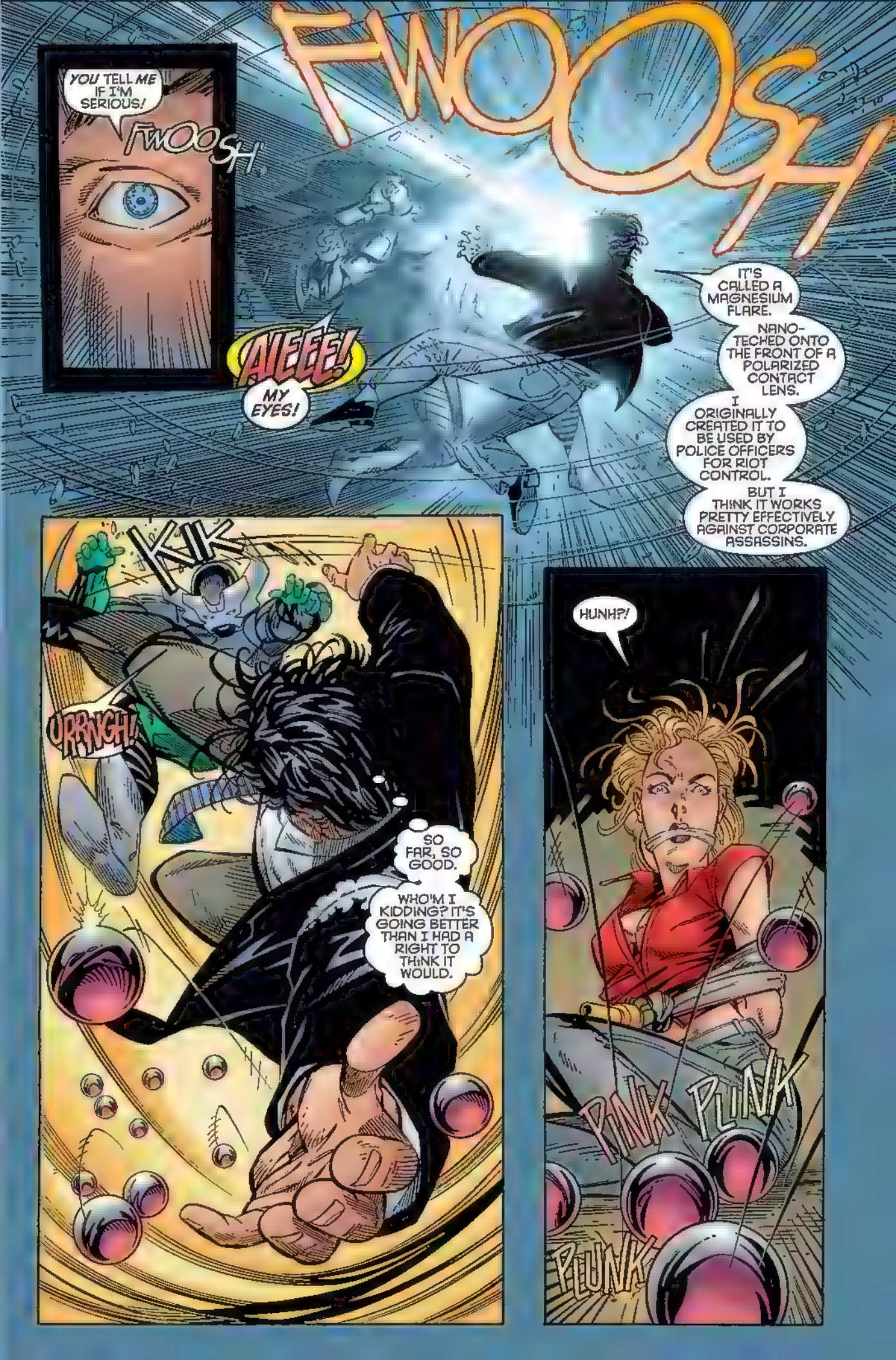
FOR A MOMENT.
FWIZZZZZ
P!
ANTHONY STARK?
NO.
BUT I GET THAT ALL THE TIME.
I DON'T SEE IT MYSELF, BUT PEOPLE TELL ME WE HAVE THE SAME EYES.

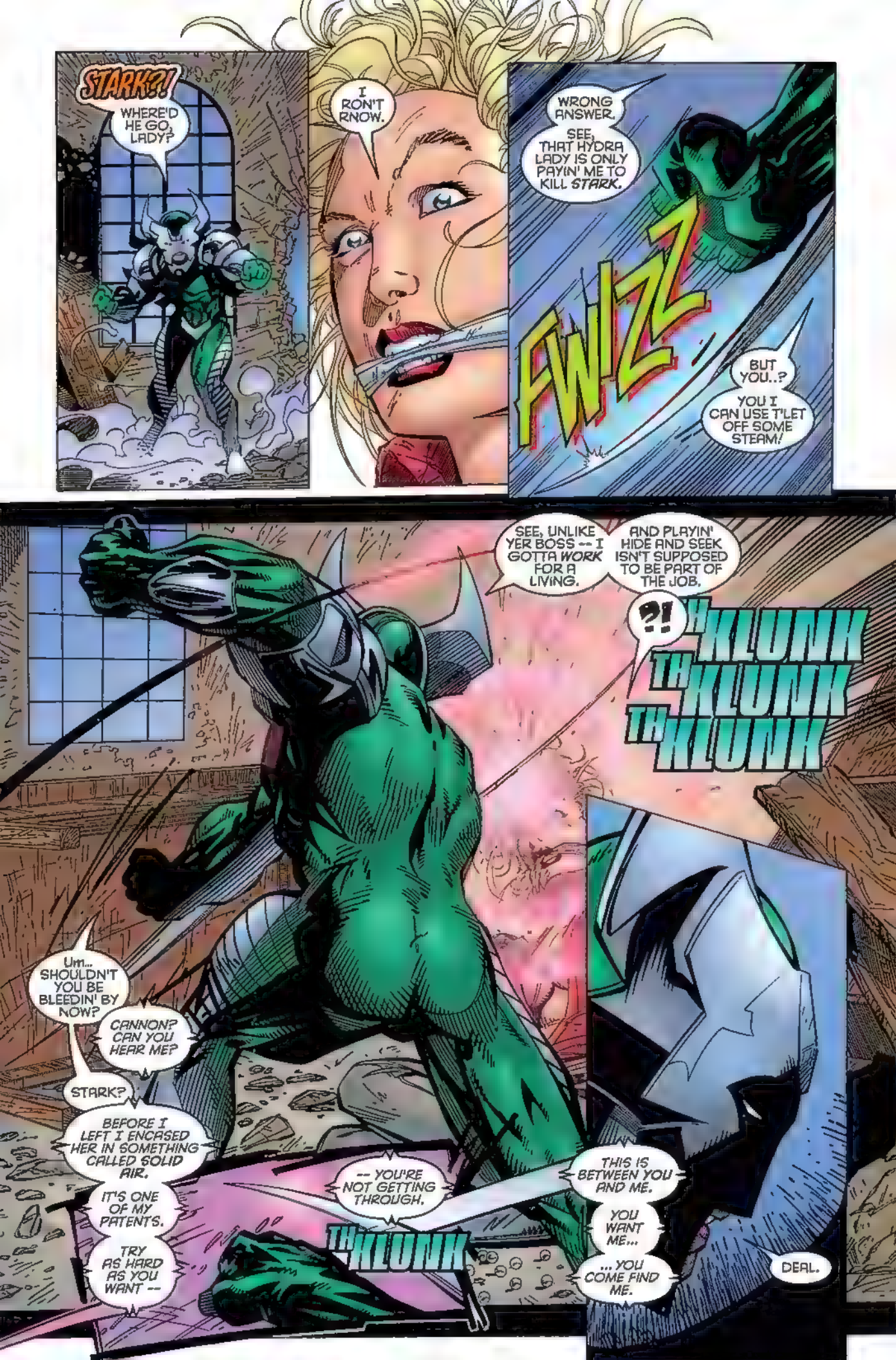

YA THINK THAT'S FUNNY?
MODERATELY. YOU?
WRSKRUNCH
IF NOT FOR THE FACT I'M ALL BUT SEWN INTO THE CHESTPLATE THAT KEEPS MY SHREDDED HEART POUNDING...
... I'D BE SO MUCH TOMATO PASTE BY NOW.
ACCORDING TO THE INTERPOL FILES I 'JACKED AFTER THIS GUY'S VOICE VERIFICATION --
-- THIS "WHIRLWIND" HAS THE ABILITY TO SPIN HIMSELF AROUND AT SUPERSPEED.
PRETTY DEADLY...
... CONSIDERING IT'S SUCH A STUPID POWER.
SO... WAS THAT YOUR BEST SHOT?
TOUGH
AS ENJOYABLE A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE AS THAT WAS, IT DIDN'T HELP ME COME UP WITH ANY ANSWERS.
I'M STILL STUCK HERE WITH A LUNATIC INTENT ON OPENING UP A STARK BURGER FRANCHISE.
YOU REALIZE THIS IS TAKING ME AWAY FROM MY GOLF GAME?

295 PARK AVENUE SOUTH...
... THE OFFICE OF Dr. LEONARD SAMSON...
SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING, BRUCE, IS NOT ONLY ARE YOU NOT DEAD...
... YOU ARE THIS -- THIS INCREDIBLE HULK -- THAT HAS BEEN TEARING UP THE EASTERN SEABOARD?
WELCOME TO MARLBORO NY
AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL, YES.
BUT YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME -- THE WHOLE MESS STARTED WHEN I TRIED TO PREVENT THE GAMMA BOMB I CREATED FOR STARK INTERNATIONAL FROM EVER BEING USED.
I DO BELIEVE YOU, BRUCE.
I DO.
BUT YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME... YOU NEED TO TURN YOURSELF IN.
I'LL DO EVERYTHING I CAN TO HELP YOU... I KNOW STARK WILL, TOO.
BRUCE..?

SORRY, LEN.
I WAS JUST... REMEMBERING.
AT ONE TIME, MAYBE. BUT NOT *THIS* TONY.
BUT MAYBE REED --
--HMP?
BRUCE... YOU AND ANTHONY GO WAY BACK.
YOU HAVE TO TRUST *SOMEONE.*
YOU'RE EXHIBITING THE SAME FEARS AND ANXIETIES THAT GOT YOU INTO THIS MESS TO BEGIN WITH.
Uh-oh.
BRUCE, WHAT IS IT?
COMPANY.
CALL YOU BACK.
BRUCE, DON'T --
BRUCE?!
KLIK
NEARBY.
THE LINE WENT DEAD, AGENT SITWELL.
SORRY, SIR -- WE COULDN'T MAKE THE TRACE.
NOT A PROBLEM.
IF THAT CONVERSATION WAS ANY INDICATION, BOTH Dr. BRUCE BANNER --
-- AND THE HULK --
-- WILL BE MAKING THEIR LOCATIONS OBVIOUS, SOON ENOUGH.

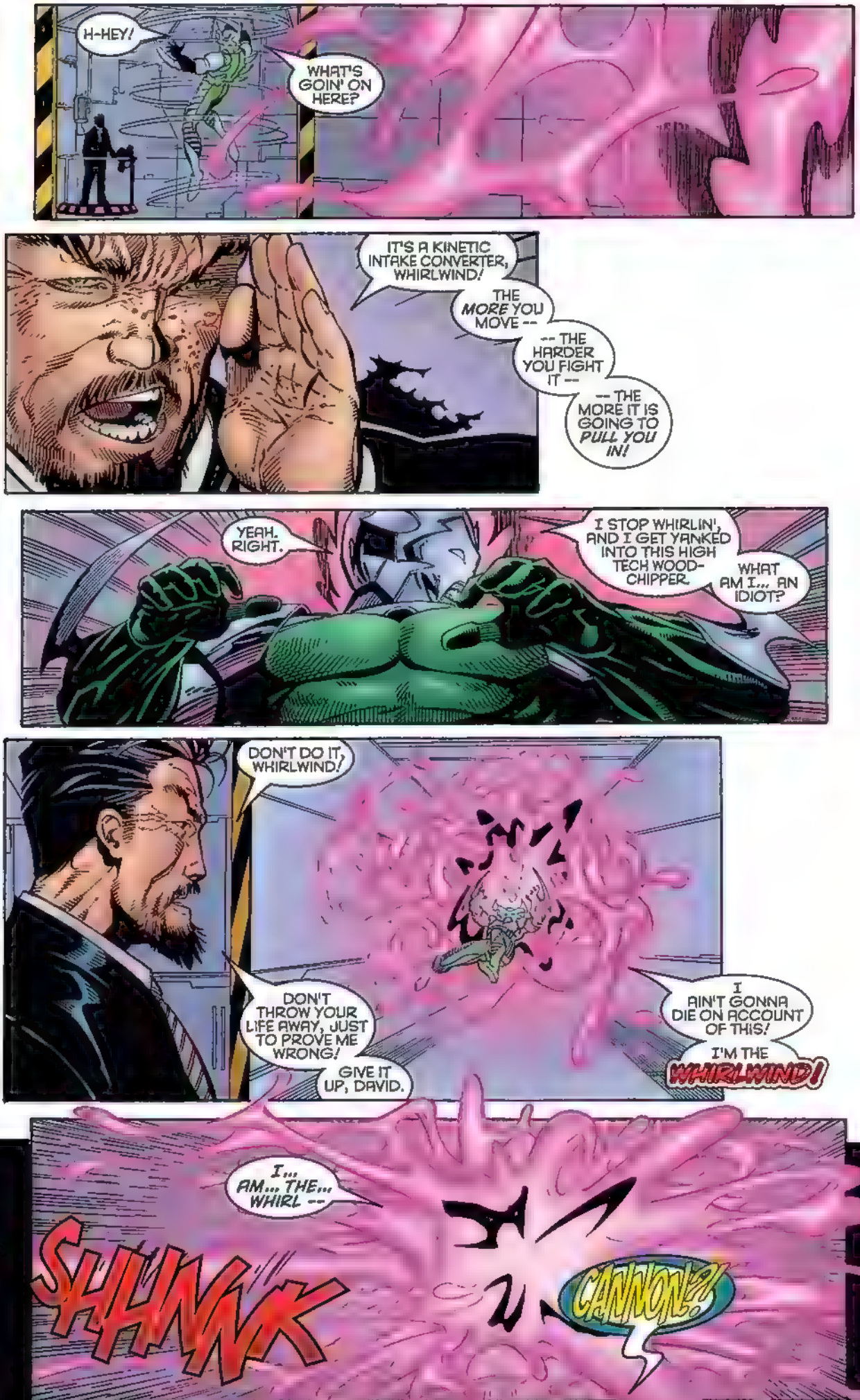
LONG ISLAND...
YA KNOW, I MUST CHILL 'BOUT THIRTY, FORTY PEOPLE A YEAR.
BUT I DON'T ALWAYS ENJOY IT.
THIS?
THIS IS DIFFERENT.
YA SMELL OF MONEY, STARK.
I HATE THE SMELL OF MONEY THAT AIN'T MINE.
IF IT'S CASH YOU NEED, CANNON --
-- REST ASSURED, I'LL COVER THE COST OF THE FUNERAL.
WHA --?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I'M SAYING IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO PEPPER --
-- I'M GOING TO KILL YOU.
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
LOOK INTO MY EYES, CANNON --

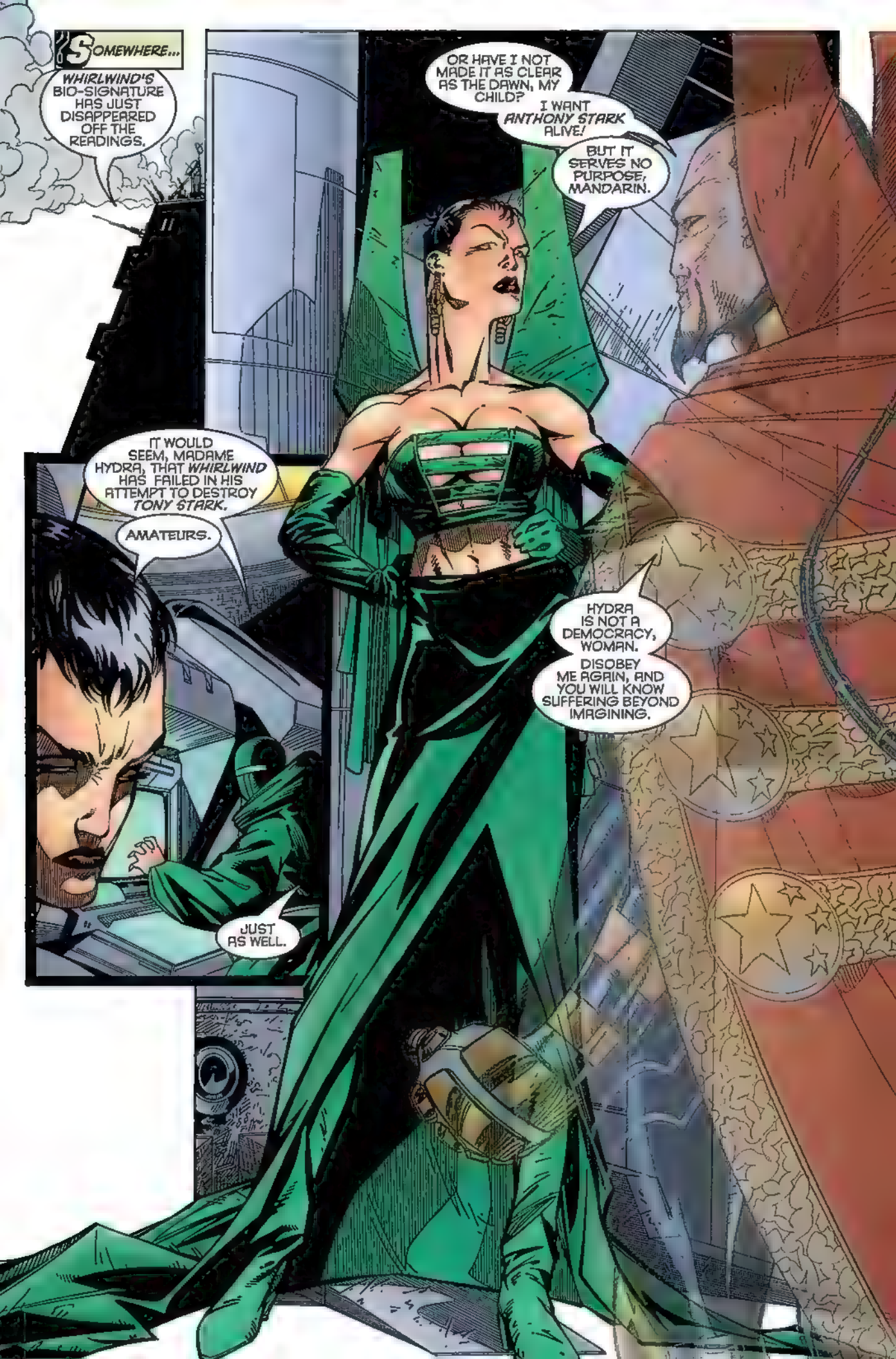

FWOOSH
YOU TELL ME IF I'M SERIOUS!
FWOOSH
AIEEE!
MY EYES!
IT'S CALLED A MAGNESIUM FLARE.
NANO-TECHED ONTO THE FRONT OF A POLARIZED CONTACT LENS.
I ORIGINALLY CREATED IT TO BE USED BY POLICE OFFICERS FOR RIOT CONTROL.
BUT I THINK IT WORKS PRETTY EFFECTIVELY AGAINST CORPORATE ASSASSINS.
KIK
URRNGH!
SO FAR, SO GOOD.
WHO'M I KIDDING? IT'S GOING BETTER THAN I HAD A RIGHT TO THINK IT WOULD.
HUNH?!
PINK
PLINK
PLUNK

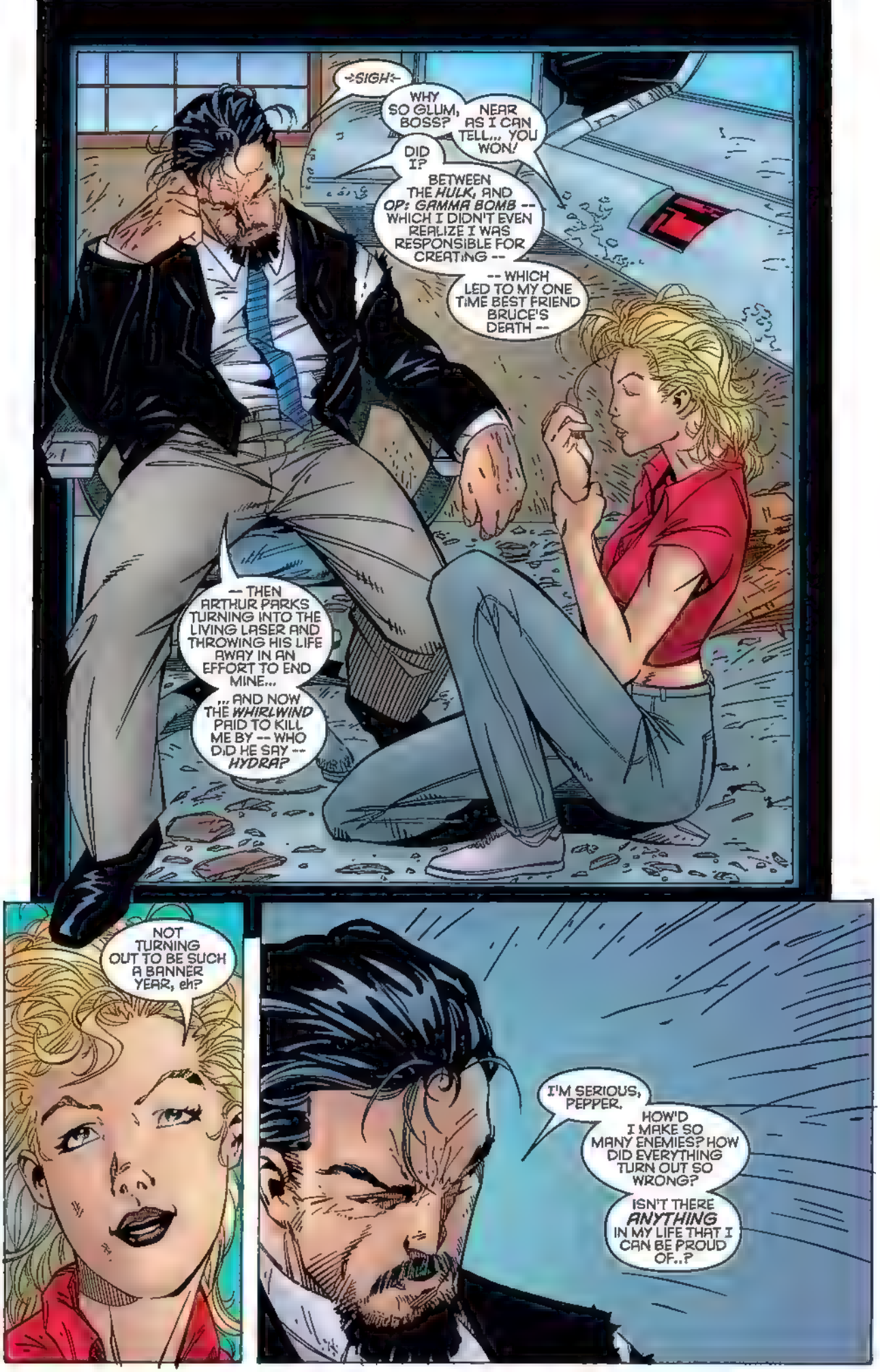

STARK?!
WHERE'D HE GO, LADY?
I RON'T RNOW.
WRONG ANSWER.
SEE, THAT HYDRA LADY IS ONLY PAYIN' ME TO KILL STARK.
FWIZZ
BUT YOU..?
YOU I CAN USE T'LET OFF SOME STEAM!
SEE, UNLIKE YER BOSS -- I GOTTA WORK FOR A LIVING.
AND PLAYIN' HIDE AND SEEK ISN'T SUPPOSED TO BE PART OF THE JOB.
?!
THKLUNK
THKLUNK
THKLUNK
Um... SHOULDN'T YOU BE BLEEDIN' BY NOW?
CANNON? CAN YOU HEAR ME?
STARK?
BEFORE I LEFT I ENCASED HER IN SOMETHING CALLED SOLID AIR.
IT'S ONE OF MY PATENTS.
TRY AS HARD AS YOU WANT --
-- YOU'RE NOT GETTING THROUGH.
THKLUNK
THIS IS BETWEEN YOU AND ME.
YOU WANT ME...
... YOU COME FIND ME.
DEAL.

ZRRAK
ZWKLNG
KBLANG
ACCORDING TO THOSE SOUNDS, HE'S COVERING UP-STAIRS FIRST!
THAT OUGHT TO BUY ME A FEW SECONDS.
ALL IN ALL, I'D HAVE TO SAY -- CONSIDERING THE CIRCUMSTANCES -- EVERYTHING'S GOING PRETTY WELL.
NOW, IF THE EXPERIMENT I WAS WORKING ON BEFORE I GOT... DISTRACTED... IS STILL BEHIND THIS DOOR --
-- I'LL BE IN BUSINESS.
WHICH IS HOW I GOT INTO THIS MESS IN THE FIRST PLACE.
PERFECT.
THIS DEVICE SHOULD BE ONLINE IN JUST ABOUT TEN SECONDS.
HE SHOULDN'T BE HERE FOR ANOTHER --
SKKRAKA
BOOM
STARK?!

MAN, YOU ARE SO DEAD.
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW DEAD.
STOP.
NOW.
AND YOU'LL LIVE.
KEEP HOVERING THERE..?
... YOU'RE DEAD.
YOUR CHOICE.
WHAT --
-- ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT?
I'M TALKING ABOUT THAT.

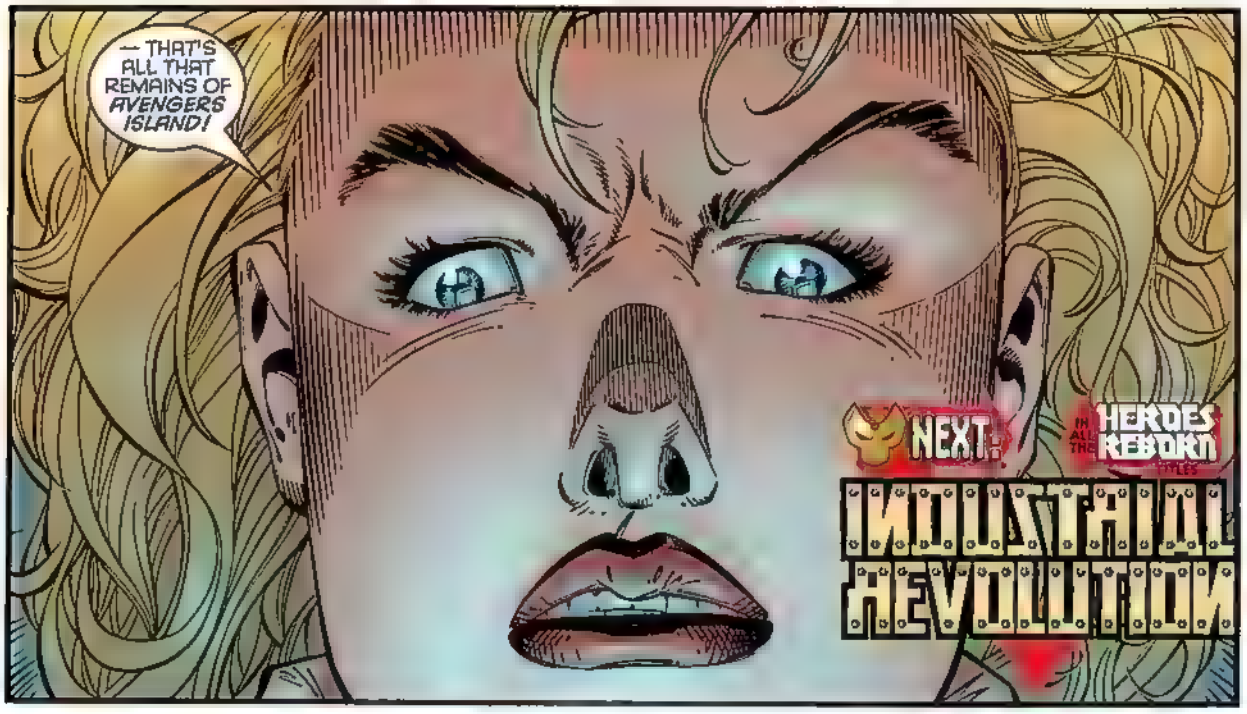

H-HEY!
WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?
IT'S A KINETIC INTAKE CONVERTER, WHIRLWIND!
THE MORE YOU MOVE --
-- THE HARDER YOU FIGHT IT --
-- THE MORE IT IS GOING TO PULL YOU IN!
YEAH. RIGHT.
I STOP WHIRLIN', AND I GET YANKED INTO THIS HIGH TECH WOOD-CHIPPER.
WHAT AM I... AN IDIOT?
DON'T DO IT, WHIRLWIND!
DON'T THROW YOUR LIFE AWAY, JUST TO PROVE ME WRONG!
GIVE IT UP, DAVID.
I AIN'T GONNA DIE ON ACCOUNT OF THIS!
I'M THE WHIRLWIND!
I... AM... THE... WHIRL --
SHWWK
CANNON!?


SOMEWHERE...
WHIRLWIND'S BIO-SIGNATURE HAS JUST DISAPPEARED OFF THE READINGS.
OR HAVE I NOT MADE IT AS CLEAR AS THE DAWN, MY CHILD?
I WANT ANTHONY STARK ALIVE!
BUT IT SERVES NO PURPOSE, MANDARIN.
IT WOULD SEEM, MADAME HYDRA, THAT WHIRLWIND HAS FAILED IN HIS ATTEMPT TO DESTROY TONY STARK.
AMATEURS.
HYDRA IS NOT A DEMOCRACY, WOMAN.
DISOBEY ME AGAIN, AND YOU WILL KNOW SUFFERING BEYOND IMAGINING.
JUST AS WELL.


-SIGH-
WHY SO GLUM, BOSS?
NEAR AS I CAN TELL... YOU WON!
DID I?
BETWEEN THE *HULK*, AND *OP: GAMMA BOMB* -- WHICH I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING --
-- WHICH LED TO MY ONE TIME BEST FRIEND BRUCE'S DEATH --
-- THEN ARTHUR PARKS TURNING INTO THE LIVING LASER AND THROWING HIS LIFE AWAY IN AN EFFORT TO END MINE...
... AND NOW THE *WHIRLWIND* PAID TO KILL ME BY -- WHO DID HE SAY -- *HYDRA*?
NOT TURNING OUT TO BE SUCH A BANNER YEAR, eh?
I'M SERIOUS, PEPPER.
HOW'D I MAKE SO MANY ENEMIES? HOW DID EVERYTHING TURN OUT SO WRONG?
ISN'T THERE *ANYTHING* IN MY LIFE THAT I CAN BE PROUD OF..?

YES.
COMPUTER: RUN HOLOGRPHIC FILE: *EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES.*
I...
YES, BOSS.
YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING TOGETHER... *THE AVENGERS.*

BUT HOW..?
WHEN?
WHO ARE THEY?
WHAT DID I HAVE TO DO WITH THEIR --
GOSH, Mr. STARK... KEEP THIS UP AND I'LL HAVE TO START GETTING PAID BY THE ANSWER INSTEAD THE HOUR.
LET ME TAKE YOU THROUGH THIS ONE... STEP...
... AT A...
... TIME?
PEPPER -- WHAT IS IT?
THAT BIG SWIRLY MASS ALONG THE HUDSON RIVER?
THAT'D BE IT, YES.
ACCORDING TO THE COORDINATES I PUNCHED IN ON THE COMPUTER --


-- THAT'S ALL THAT REMAINS OF AVENGERS ISLAND!
NEXT:
IN ALL THE HEROES REBORN TITLES
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

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HULK KEEPS SAYING IT AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN BUT NO ONE LISTENS! HULK JUST WANTS TO BE LEFT ALONE!
THOOM
THOOM
SCOTT LOBDELL STORY
JIM LEE WHILCE PORTACIO RYAN BENJAMIN PENCILS
SCOTT WILLIAMS JD TREVOR SCOTT SALEEM CRAWFORD RICHARD FRIEND SAL REGLA INKS
JOE CHIODO MARTIN JIMENEZ COLORS
WILDSTORM FX COMPUTER COLORS
RICH, DAVE, ALBERT 'N' LIZ @ COMICRAFT LETTERS
MIKE HEISLER EDITOR
BOB HARRAS EDITOR IN CHIEF

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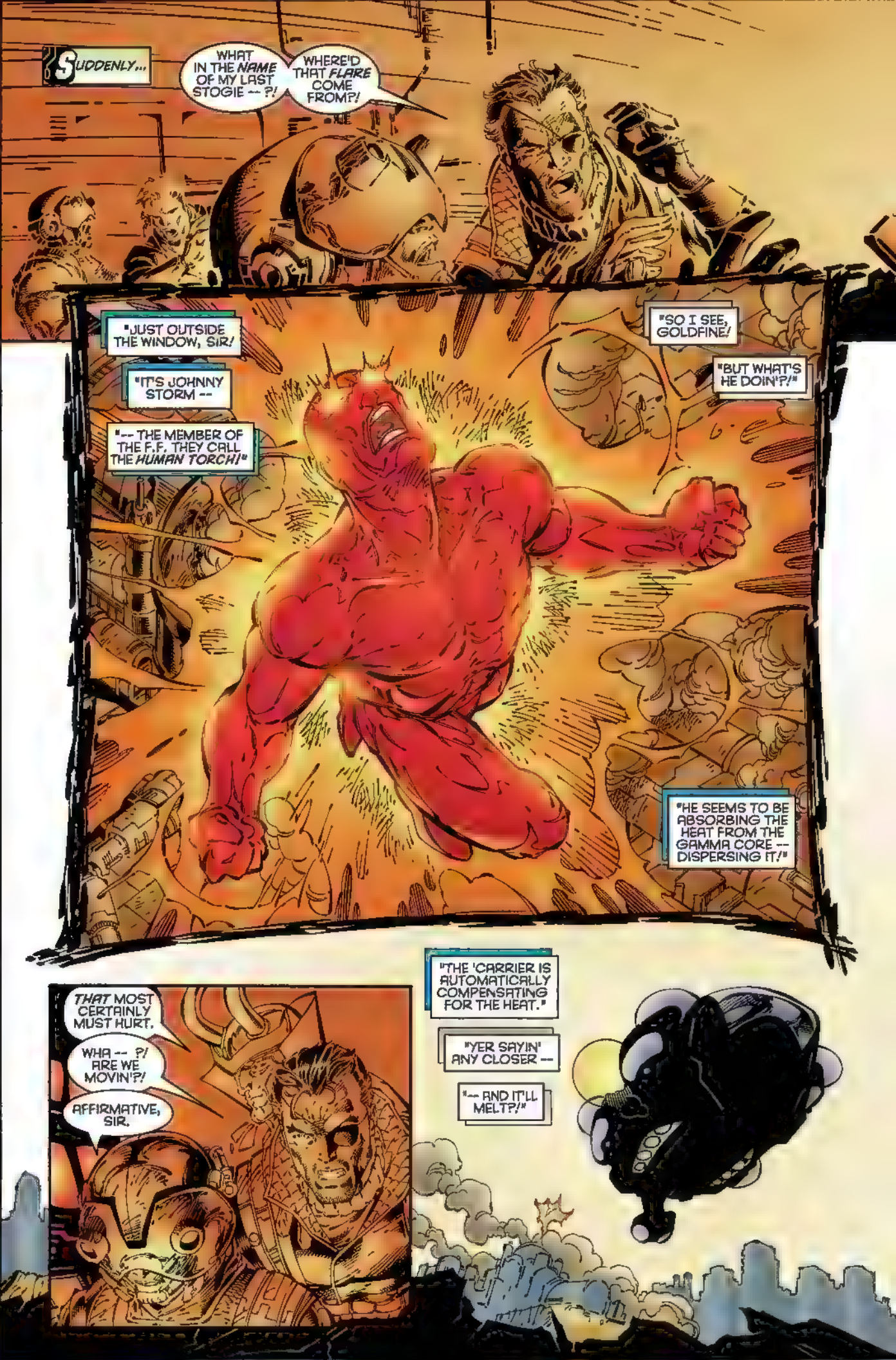
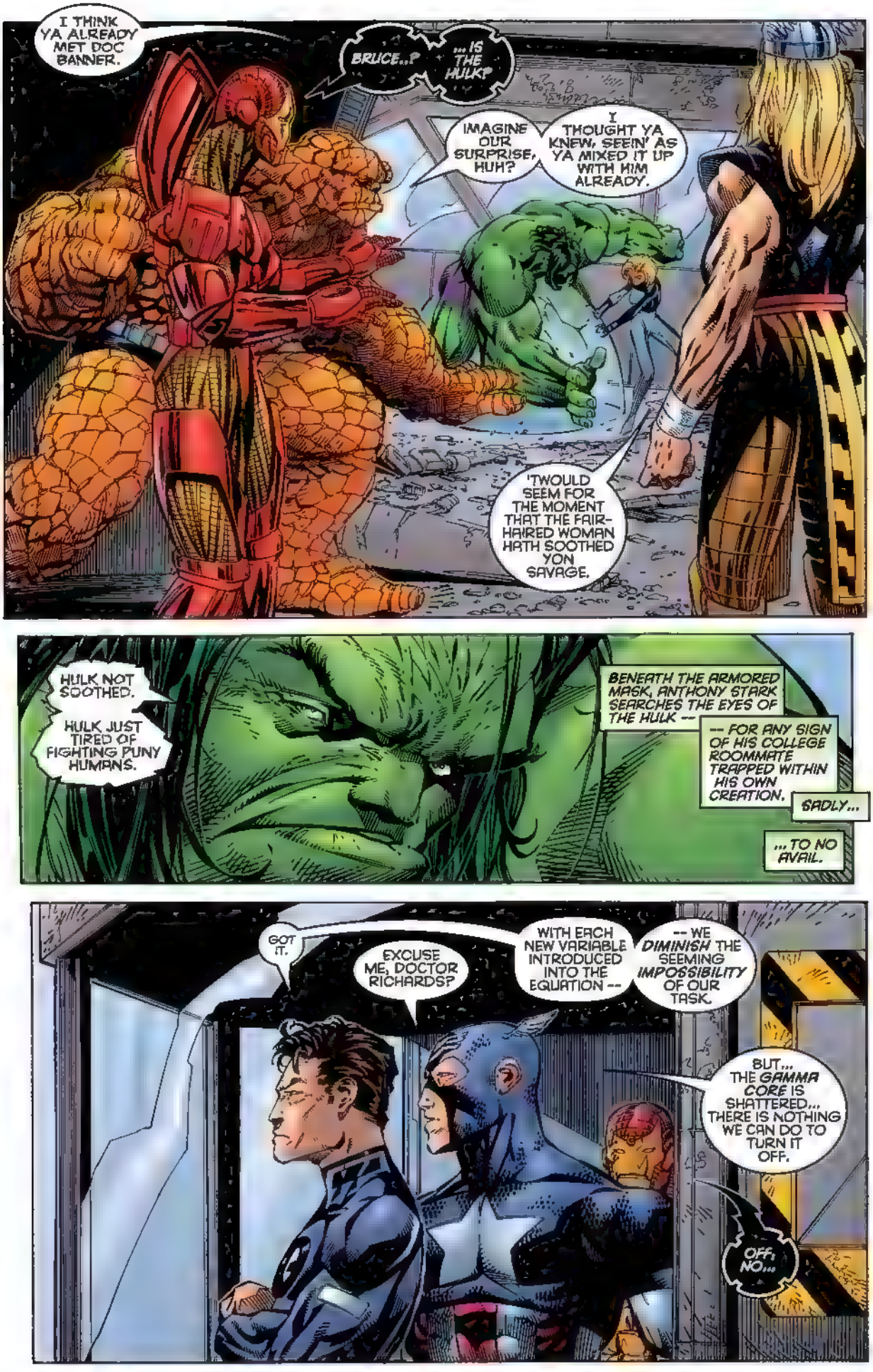
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION PART 2
INDUSTRIAL REVELATION!
A Stan Lee Presentation
NOT TO BE OVERLY CRITICAL, HULK --
-- BUT MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT BEFORE YOUR RAMPAGE DAMAGED THE GAMMA CORE HERE AT AVENGERS ISLAND!*
HULK DID NOT MAKE DUMB OLD GAMMA CORE!
HULK ONLY BROKE IT!
THE ONE YOU SHOULD BOTHER IS BANNER!
D'UH, GREEN JEANS!
BUT THAT COULD BE A PROBLEM SINCE YOU AND DOC --
BELAY THAT THOUGHT, HELLCAT.
CAPTAIN AMERICA IS RIGHT
I'VE KNOWN BRUCE BANNER SINCE COLLEGE -- IT WOULD SEEM THAT WHATEVER CAUSED HIM TO BECOME THIS GAMMA-IRRADIATED "HULK".
ALSO PREVENTS HIM FROM FULLY UNDERSTANDING THAT HE AND THIS CREATURE ARE ONE AND THE SAME!
TO FORCE THE ISSUE WOULD ONLY AGITATE HIM FURTHER.

TALK! TALK! TALK!
PUNY HUMANS MAKE HULK'S HEAD HURT WITH ALL YOUR TALK!
SPEAKING OF HEADACHES, REED --
-- I'VE NEVER HAD TO MAINTAIN MY FORCE FIELD THIS LONG AGAINST THIS KIND OF BRUTE FORCE.
WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO MAKE HIM CHANGE BACK!
EASIER SAID THAN DONE, SUE, IF MY SPECULATION IS CORRECT.
THE RADIATION THROWN OFF BY THE DAMAGED GAMMA CORE MAY WELL SERVE TO SUSTAIN THE HULK'S CURRENT STATE INDEFINITELY...
... HOWEVER, EVEN THE CONSIDERABLE THREAT THAT HE POSES IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE IMMINENT DEVASTATION IF WE WERE UNABLE TO PREVENT THE ALMOST CERTAIN MELTDOWN OF THE CORE ITSELF.
DOCTOR RICHARDS -- ARE YOU SAYING THAT WE HAVE TO WORK WITH THE HULK?
I'M SAYING, CAPTAIN AMERICA, THAT EVEN THEN --
-- THE ODDS OF SUCCEEDING ARE...
... WELL...
... BEYOND MEASURE.

MEANWHILE --
BRRRR!
'TIS SO SCARY AS TO MAKE ME AVERT MINE EYES...
NAY!
-- ABOARD THE HIGH TECH FLOATING GARRISON THAT IS THE S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER --
-- SUPER AGENT SUPREME NICHOLAS FURY IS DOING HIS PART TO HELP ALLEVIATE THE CURRENT EXIGENCY BELOW.
LOOK, POKEY--
LOKI -- AS IN "NORSE GOD OF MISCHIEF".
-- WHATEVER. THE POINT IS WE GOT OUR HANDS FULL HERE...
... SO DO US MERE MORTALS ON BOARD --
-- NOT T'MENTION THE SOME ODD BILLION PEOPLE ON THE EASTERN SEA-BOARD GETTING READY T'BE FRIED --
-- A BIG FLAMIN', FLAPPIN' FLAMBÉD FAVOR BY SHUTTIN' UP 'EFORE YA IRRITATE ME!
Um, SIR?
WHO'RE YOU TALKING TO?


SUDDENLY...
WHAT IN THE NAME OF MY LAST STOGIE -- ?!
WHERE'D THAT FLARE COME FROM?!
"JUST OUTSIDE THE WINDOW, SIR!
"IT'S JOHNNY STORM --
"-- THE MEMBER OF THE F.F. THEY CALL THE HUMAN TORCH!"
"SO I SEE, GOLDFINE!
"BUT WHAT'S HE DOIN'?!"
"HE SEEMS TO BE ABSORBING THE HEAT FROM THE GAMMA CORE -- DISPERSING IT!"
"THE 'CARRIER IS AUTOMATICALLY COMPENSATING FOR THE HEAT."
"YER SAYIN' ANY CLOSER --
"-- AND IT'LL MELT?!"
THAT MOST CERTAINLY MUST HURT.
WHA -- ?! ARE WE MOVIN'?!
AFFIRMATIVE, SIR.

BELOW...
... IRON MAN...
... THE THING...
... AND THE MIGHTY THOR ENTER THE FRAY...
MY APOLOGIES, ORANGE ONE.
BUT LET US AWAY FROM THIS GLORIOUS REUNION... AND ATTEND TO THE TASK AT HAND.
QUITE THE LEFT HOOK THERE, GOLDILOCKS --
-- CONSIDERIN' I WAS ONLY TRYIN' T'WAKE YER SORRY NORSE BUTT UP*!
*see AVENGERS 8b -- Noggin' Mike.
Ummm, GRIMM... HE IS A GOD, RIGHT?
BELIEVE ME, SHELLHEAD -- YA AIN'T SEEN NOTHIN' YET.
OH, IRON MAN -- THOR.
THOR -- IRON MAN.
HAIL, GOLDEN ONE.
YEAH.
HAIL.


I THINK YA ALREADY MET DOC BANNER.
BRUCE..?
...IS THE HULK?
IMAGINE OUR SURPRISE, HUH?
I THOUGHT YA KNEW, SEEIN' AS YA MIXED IT UP WITH HIM ALREADY.
'TWOULD SEEM FOR THE MOMENT THAT THE FAIR-HAIRED WOMAN HATH SOOTHED YON SAVAGE.
HULK NOT SOOTHED.
HULK JUST TIRED OF FIGHTING PUNY HUMANS.
BENEATH THE ARMORED MASK, ANTHONY STARK SEARCHES THE EYES OF THE HULK --
-- FOR ANY SIGN OF HIS COLLEGE ROOMMATE TRAPPED WITHIN HIS OWN CREATION.
SADLY...
...TO NO AVAIL.
GOT IT.
EXCUSE ME, DOCTOR RICHARDS?
WITH EACH NEW VARIABLE INTRODUCED INTO THE EQUATION --
-- WE DIMINISH THE SEEMING IMPOSSIBILITY OF OUR TASK.
BUT... THE GAMMA CORE IS SHATTERED... THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO TO TURN IT OFF.
OFF, NO...

... BUT WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO RECHANNEL THE ENERGY, SO THAT IT DIRECTS ITSELF THROUGH THE CORE OF THE PLANET.
...
EXACTLY WHAT I WAS THINKING.
THAT BOTHERS YOU, MISTER FANTASTIC?
INTRIGUES ME, ACTUALLY.
IN WHAT WAY?
AS MY OLD FRIEND TONY STARK'S "BODY-GUARD"...
... YOU'RE QUITE THE ADVANCED THINKER.
GRRR.
AROUND THE REST OF THE WORLD, IT'S EASY ENOUGH TO MANIPULATE MY SECRET IDENTITY. BUT REED AND BRUCE AND I WERE CLOSE IN COLLEGE.
ALONG WITH REBEL AND VICTOR, WE SAW OURSELVES AS SOMETHING AKIN TO THE ATOMIC KNIGHTS OF TOMORROW'S ROUND TABLE.
IF WE MIGHT TURN OUR ATTENTION TO MORE WEIGHTY MATTERS FOR THE NONCE..?
WHAT GOLDILOCKS IS SAYIN' IS --
-- HE AND ME ARE GOIN' IN!

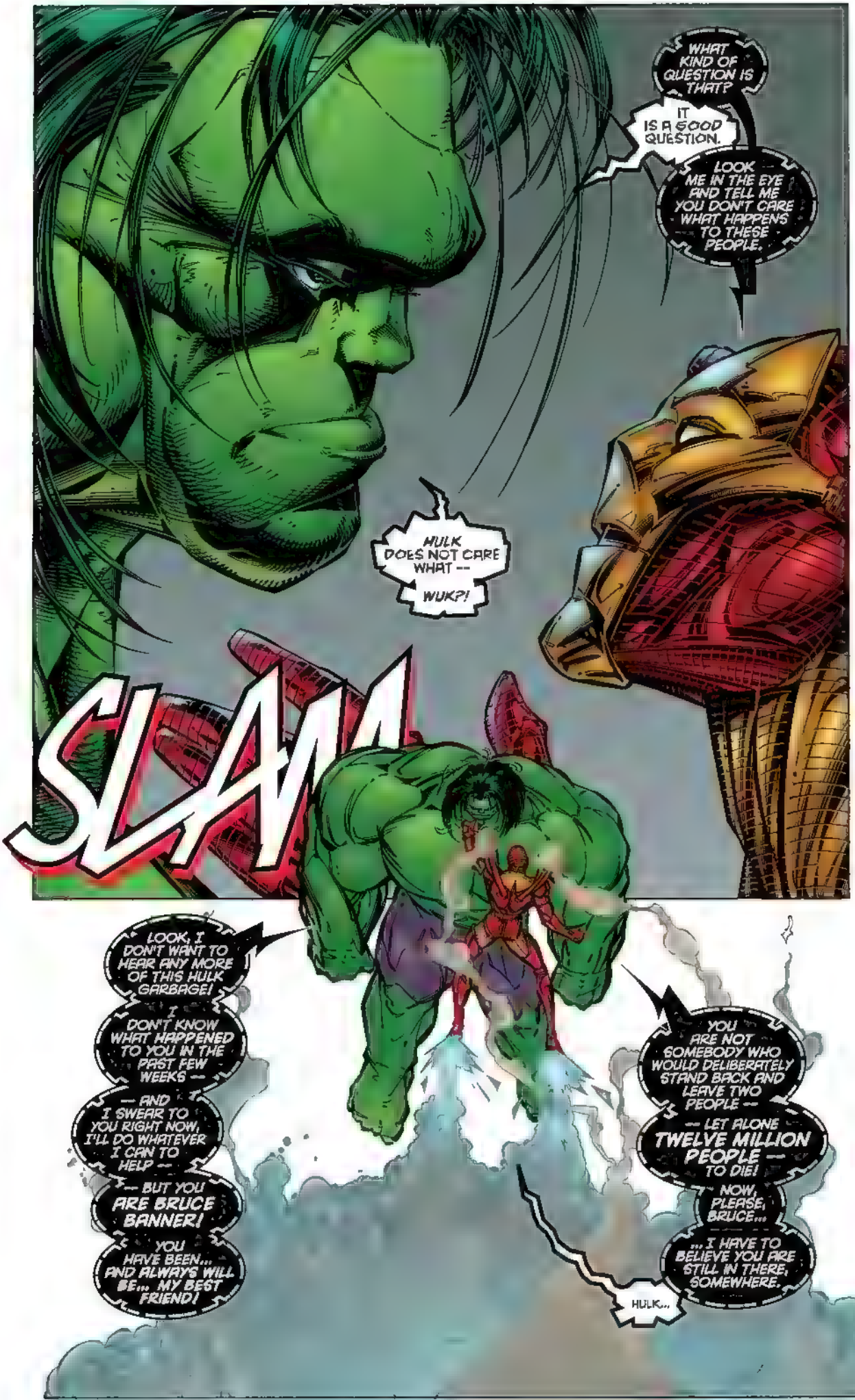
SO WHO'S GONNA' COVER US ALREADY?!
THAT'LL BE ME, GRIMM.
WITH THE TWO OF YOU ENTERING THE CORE, AND IRON MAN AND Mr. FANTASTIC CONCENTRATING ON THE SCIENTIFIC SOLUTION TO THIS CRISIS --
-- IT FALLS UPON ME TO KEEP THE BAY DOORS OPEN LONG ENOUGH TO GIVE YOU AND THOR A FIGHTING CHANCE!
I'LL NEVER STOP BEING AMAZED BY CAPTAIN AMERICA.
HERE HE IS, HAVING BEEN AS BADLY BEATEN AS THE REST OF US --
-- BUT THEN IT'S LIKE HE JUST SHRUGS IT OFF IN THE NAME OF DUTY.
ALL OF US WITH OUR "SUPER POWERS"...
...AND THERE HE IS GETTING BY MOSTLY ON RAW NERVE AND DETERMINATION.
IS IT ANY WONDER HE'S THE LEADER OF THE AVENGERS?

HMP.
A LOT HOTTER...
... IN HERE...
... THAN IT LOOKS, HUH?
FOR A MORTAL?
PERHAPS.
BUT FOR A GOD OF THUNDER...
YEAH, YEAH, YEAH.
AN' IT AIN'T THE HEAT, IT'S THE HUMILITY THAT'LL KILL YA.
HOWZABOUT I'LL USE MY BIG UGLY HIDE FER SOMETHIN' USEFUL --
-- LIKE HOLDIN' THE SHATTERED CORE WALL TOGETHER...
ZZZ

ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE CHAMBER.

THIS IS STUPID.
WHEN NOBODY WANTS HULK, IT IS "HULK IS BAD!"
"HULK MUST BE DESTROYED!"
"LOOK OUT! IT IS THE HULK!"
NOW IT IS "PLEASE, HULK."
"HELP, HULK".
"STAND OVER HERE, HULK."
PUNY HUMANS ARE ALL STUPID.
KEEP IT DOWN, HULK -- THIS TRANSMISSION TO REED IS BREAKING UP.
THE RADIATION LEVELS MUST BE OFF THE CHARTS.
AND CLIMBING!
EVEN WITH BEN AND --SQUARKK!-- THOR'S SPOT WELDING!
--- IT WON'T --QUEEK-- BUILD ENOUGH PRES --SPRIIZZTT-- SURE INTERNALLY!
YOU'RE SAYING WE HAVE TO CLOSE THE MAIN VALVE AS WELL?
IT'S OUR --ZZZZZTTT-- ONLY CHANCE!
THEN STRUGGLE... ONWARD... WE MUST!
WE'LL BE AS... STRONG AS... WE GOTTA BE.
BAH!
HULK IS STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!
EVERYONE KNOWS THAT.

WOTTA... REVOLTIN' ...
ALAS, YON THING HAS... FALLEN.
THOR, LISTEN TO ME!
EVEN MY ARMOR IS HAVING DIFFICULTY COMPENSATING FOR THE RADIATION.
THUNDER GOD OR NOT --
-- YOUR SKIN IS CAPABLE OF BURNING OFF THE BONE!
HE'S RIGHT, THOR. YOU'VE GOT TO PULL BACK.
REED, IS THERE ANY HOPE THAT THEY'VE SEALED ENOUGH OF THE CHAMBER THAT --
NO, CAP... I'M AFRAID NOT.
THIS WAS AN ALL OR NOTHING GAMBIT!
FAILURE WAS NEVER AN OPTION, GENTLEMEN!
HULK, GIVE ME A HAND.
WHY?
WHY SHOULD HULK SAVE PUNY HUMANS?


WHAT KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT?
IT IS A GOOD QUESTION.
LOOK ME IN THE EYE AND TELL ME YOU DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO THESE PEOPLE.
HULK DOES NOT CARE WHAT --
WUK?!
SLAM
LOOK, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY MORE OF THIS HULK GARBAGE!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS --
-- AND I SWEAR TO YOU RIGHT NOW, I'LL DO WHATEVER I CAN TO HELP --
-- BUT YOU ARE BRUCE BANNER!
YOU HAVE BEEN... AND ALWAYS WILL BE... MY BEST FRIEND!
YOU ARE NOT SOMEBODY WHO WOULD DELIBERATELY STAND BACK AND LEAVE TWO PEOPLE --
-- LET ALONE TWELVE MILLION PEOPLE -- TO DIE!
NOW, PLEASE, BRUCE...
... I HAVE TO BELIEVE YOU ARE STILL IN THERE, SOMEWHERE.
HULK...

...WILL HELP IRON MAN.
BUT ONLY BECAUSE *HULK* CHANGED HIS MIND.
NOT BECAUSE OF ANYTHING *IRON MAN* SAID.
GET ORANGE MAN AND HAMMER MAN OUT OF HERE.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.
HULK IS NOT STUPID.
HE KNOWS WHAT TO DO.

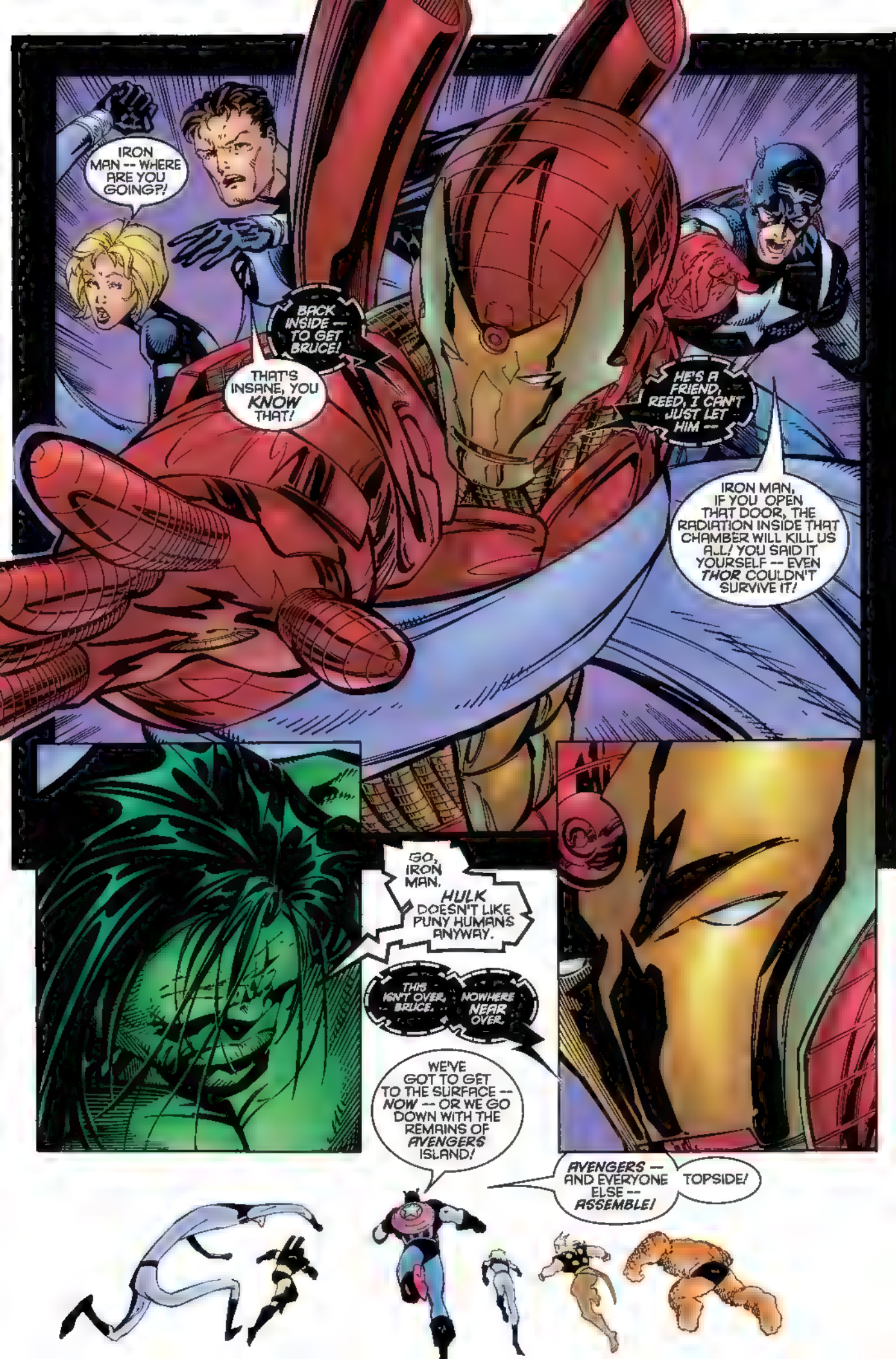
HOW ARE THEY, IRON MAN?
... BUT AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL, HE'LL BE FINE WITH TREATMENT.
REED, YOU REALIZE WE NEED TO SEAL THE CHAMBER?
YES, CAPTAIN AMERICA -- LET THE DOORS CLOSE.
AS UNBELIEVABLE AS IT SOUNDS, THOR IS COMING AROUND ALREADY.
IF I DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER, I'D SWEAR HE WAS A GOD.
THING LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOT A MAJOR RADIATION BURN ON BOTH HANDS...
I WON'T PRETEND TO UNDERSTAND THE SCIENCE BEHIND ANY OF THIS...
... BUT ARE YOU SURE THE HULK CAN DO THIS ON HIS OWN?
IT'S NOT THE HULK WE'RE COUNTING ON.
IT'S THE MAN BENEATH THE MONSTER.
HE CAN DO IT. TRUST US.

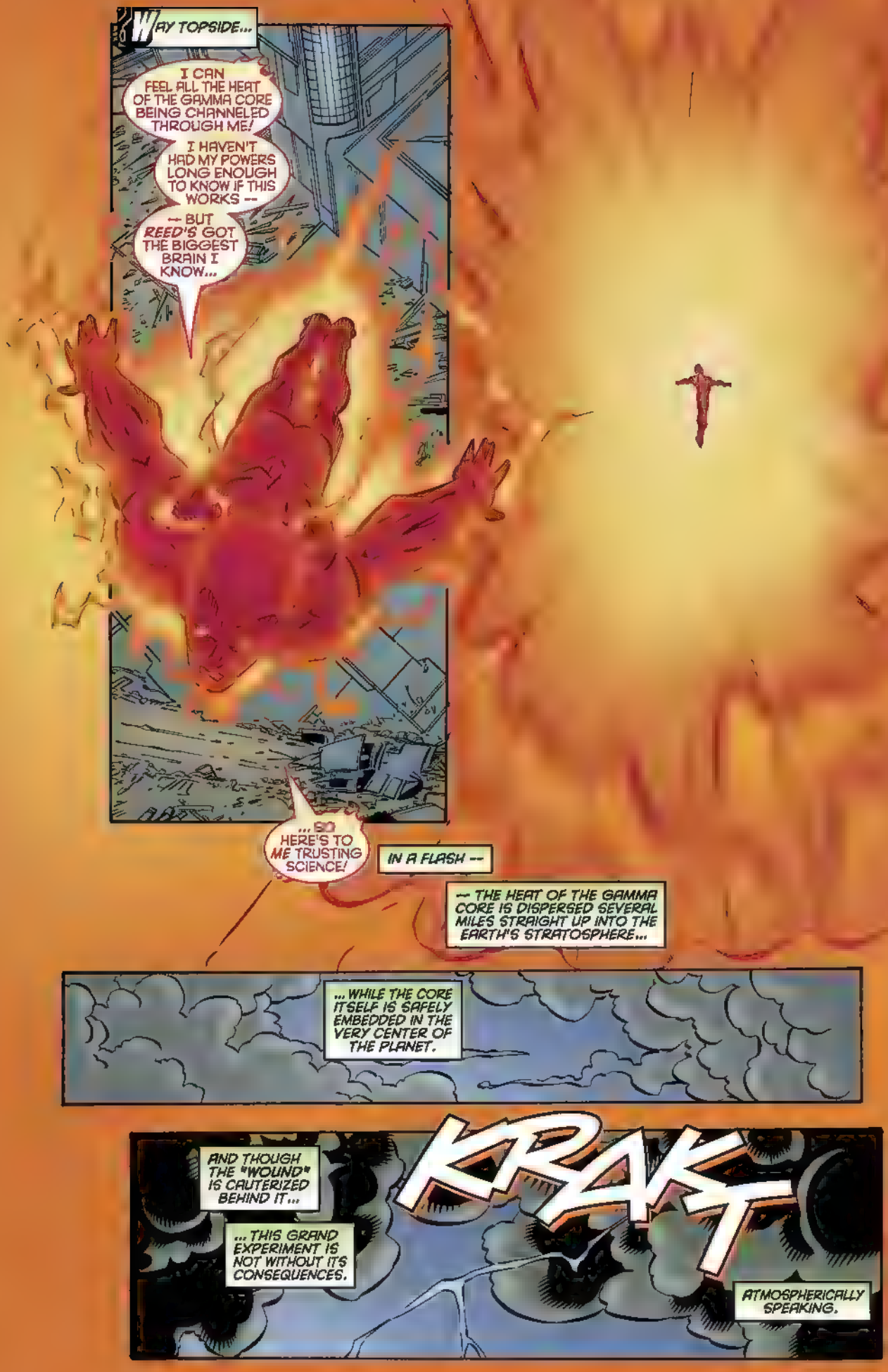
PUNY HUMANS MAKE HULK SICK!
ALL PEOPLE DO IS HUNT HULK!
URRRRRMPPH
ALL THE TANKS AND PLANES TRY TO DO
UURRRGHH
IS KILL HULK!
EVEN PUNY HUMANS IN COLOR CLOTHES... ONLY TRY TO FIGHT HULK.
UNTIL THEY NEED HULK.
BUT... MMMPPHRR... HULK... WILL SHOW... THEM...

...HULK IS THE STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!
WREEEMNT
HE'S DOING IT.
WHOA.
HEIMDALL'S EYES.

SKRUNCH
BAH! IT IS WORKING!
DOOR IS... UMPH... CLOSING!
JUST LIKE HULK KNEW IT WOULD!
REEEAK
VERILY, EVEN THE SON OF ODIN IS IMPRESSED.
FASCINATING.
AYE, MALLEABLE ONE?
THE GAMMA LEVELS ARE DECREASING...
...BUT THE PSIONIC READINGS JUST POPPED OFF THE SCALE?
PEOPLE, THERE'S SOMETHING IN THERE WITH HIM.
SOMETHING ALIVE.

BEHOLD MY MIGHTY HAND.
?!
JUST AS QUICKLY AS THE MYSTERIOUS ENTITY APPEARS --
-- IT IS GONE!
WHOE'ER IT WAS --
-- HAS DEPARTED! BRUCE WAS SUCCESSFUL -- THE GAMMA CORE IS DISSIPATING!


IRON MAN -- WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
BACK INSIDE -- TO GET BRUCE!
THAT'S INSANE, YOU KNOW THAT!
HE'S A FRIEND, REED, I CAN'T JUST LET HIM --
IRON MAN, IF YOU OPEN THAT DOOR, THE RADIATION INSIDE THAT CHAMBER WILL KILL US ALL! YOU SAID IT YOURSELF -- EVEN THOR COULDN'T SURVIVE IT!
GO, IRON MAN. HULK DOESN'T LIKE PUNY HUMANS ANYWAY.
THIS ISN'T OVER, BRUCE.
NOWHERE NEAR OVER.
WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THE SURFACE -- NOW -- OR WE GO DOWN WITH THE REMAINS OF AVENGERS ISLAND!
AVENGERS -- AND EVERYONE ELSE -- ASSEMBLE!
TOPSIDE!


WAY TOPSIDE...
I CAN FEEL ALL THE HEAT OF THE GAMMA CORE BEING CHANNELED THROUGH ME!
I HAVEN'T HAD MY POWERS LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW IF THIS WORKS --
-- BUT REED'S GOT THE BIGGEST BRAIN I KNOW...
... SO HERE'S TO ME TRUSTING SCIENCE!
IN A FLASH --
-- THE HEAT OF THE GAMMA CORE IS DISPERSED SEVERAL MILES STRAIGHT UP INTO THE EARTH'S STRATOSPHERE...
... WHILE THE CORE ITSELF IS SAFELY EMBEDDED IN THE VERY CENTER OF THE PLANET.
AND THOUGH THE "WOUND" IS CAUTERIZED BEHIND IT...
... THIS GRAND EXPERIMENT IS NOT WITHOUT ITS CONSEQUENCES.
KRAK
ATMOSPHERICALLY SPEAKING.

THIS PLACE LOOKS ABOUT AS BAD AS I FEEL.
WE'LL NEED TO GET YOU MEDICAL ATTENTION QUICKLY, BEN --
-- BUT AT LEAST WE SUCCESSFULLY SAVED ALL OF THE EASTERN SEABOARD FROM TOTAL OBLITERATION.
"AT LEAST?"
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
EVEN THOUGH THE AVENGERS WAS A NOBLE EFFORT...
... IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE ASSEMBLED FOR THE LAST TIME.
SAYS YOU.
?!

LEARN THE FATE OF THE AVENGERS IN THE CATACLYSMIC CONCLUSION OF
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN: CAPTAIN AMERICA #6
AND BE HERE NEXT MONTH TO SEE TONY STARK GET THE SURPRISE OF HIS LIFE!

MARVEL COMICS
IRON MAN
MAY 97 7
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
PORTACIO
JD
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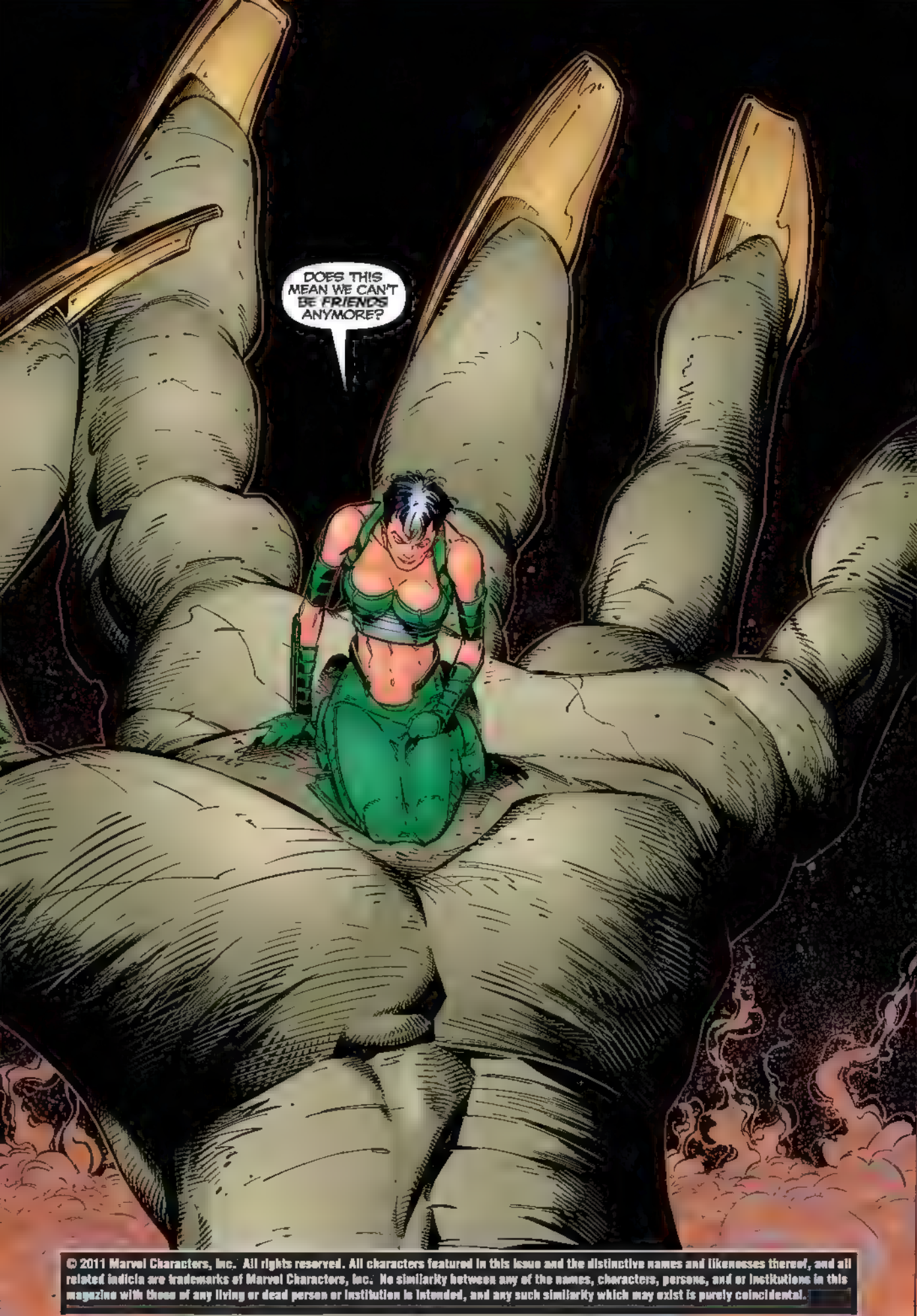

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YOU ARE NOT THE LEAST. BUT FRIGHTENED, ARE YOU, CHILD?
I AM ONLY FRIGHTENED TO DISCOVER THAT I PUT MY FAITH --
-- AND THE FUTURE OF MY HARD EARNED EMPIRE -- -- IN THE HANDS OF A FOOL WHO THINKS HE CAN SCARE ME WITH PARLOR TRICKS
GOOD.
Stan Lee Universe
LOOK BACK IN ANGER
SCOTT LOBDELL
JIM LEE
PLOT
JEPH LOEB
SCRIPT
WHILCE PORTACIO
RYAN BENJAMIN
PENCILS
JD SCOTT WILLIAMS
SALEEM CRAWFORD
SANDRA HOPE
PETER GUZMAN
INKS
JOE CHIODO
MARTIN JIMENEZ
COLORS
WILDSTORM FX
COMPUTER COLORS
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LETTERS
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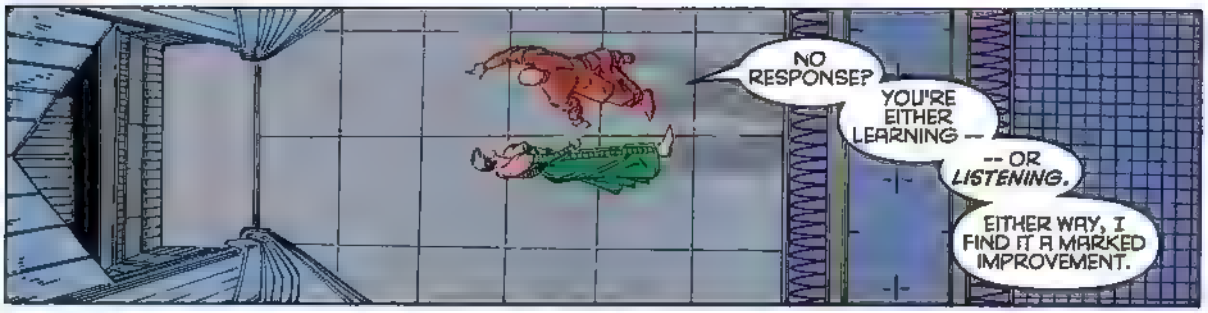
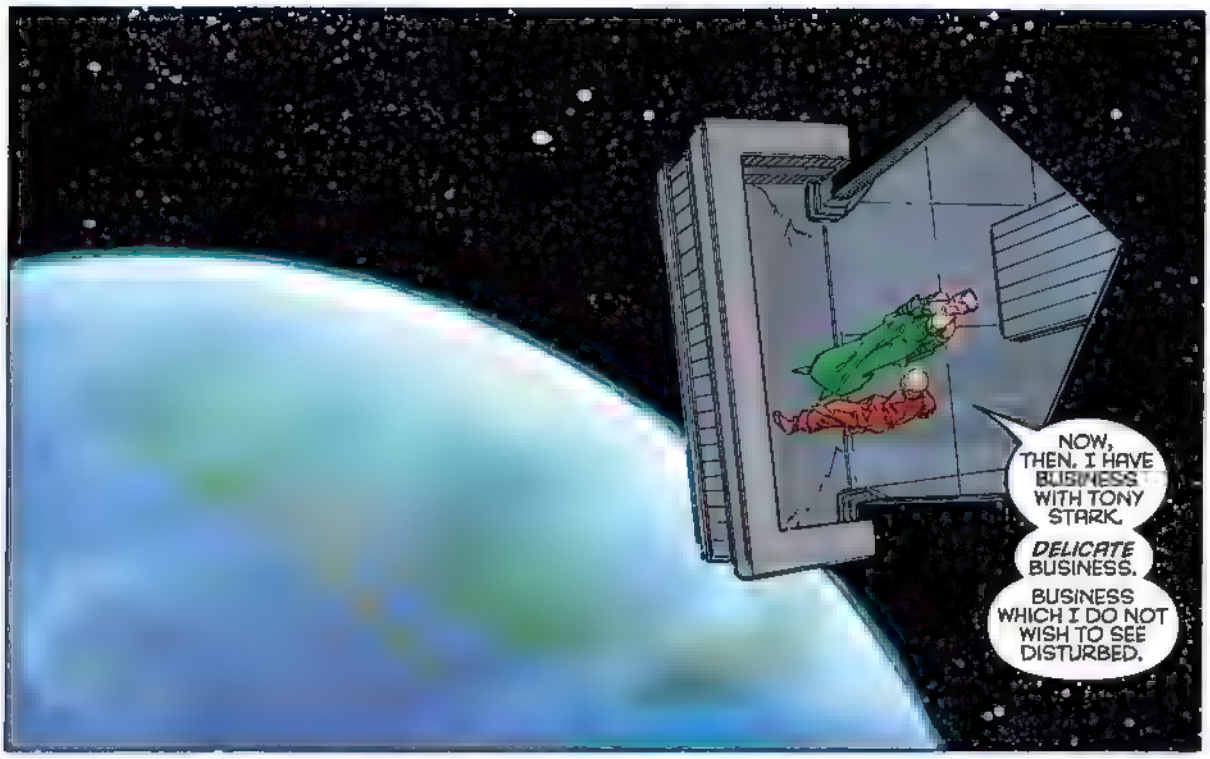
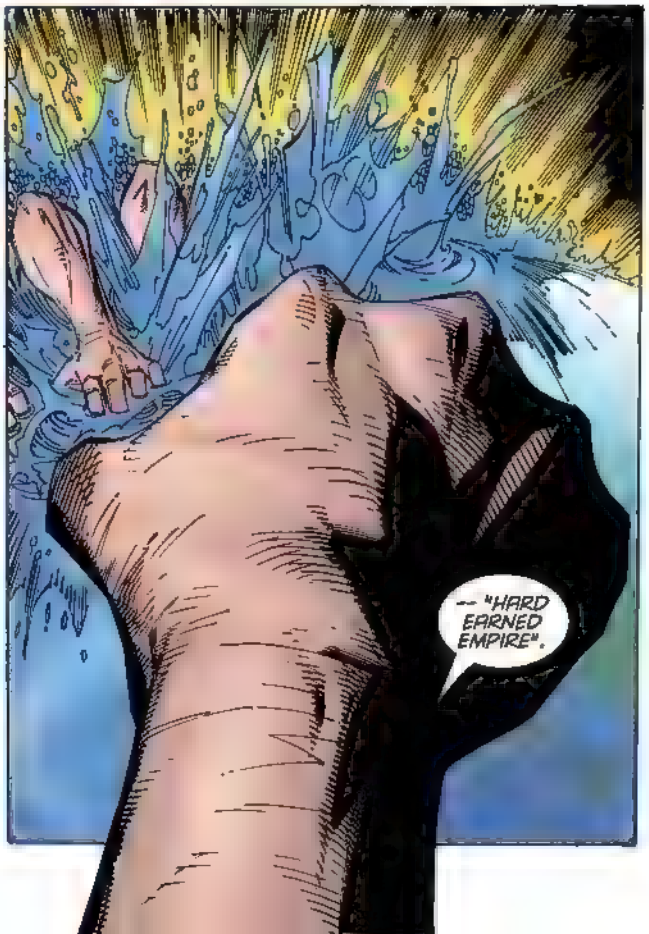
I ADMIRE THOSE WHO SPEAK THEIR MINDS.
IT BELIES A SHOW OF SPIRIT.
OF... "BACKBONE" AS THEY SAY IN THE WEST.
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE TO COMMENT ON MY BACKBONE.
OR ANY OF MY OTHER PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES.
DID YOU, MANDARIN?

ALTHOUGH.
WHEN ONE SPEAKS ONE'S MIND *WITHOUT* THINKING --
-- I HAVE TO WONDER, IS IT --
-- OUT OF BRAZENNESS?
-- STUPIDITY?
-- OR IS IT MERELY A LACK OF *RESPECT?*
FOR EXAMPLE, WHY WOULD YOU SEND YOUR... EMISSARY --
-- THIS "*WHIRLWIND*" --
-- TO *KILL* TONY STARK...*
...WHEN I *KNOW* I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT IS *MY WISH* TO KEEP *STARK ALIVE?*


NO RESPONSE?
YOU'RE EITHER LEARNING --
-- OR *LISTENING.*
EITHER WAY, I FIND IT A MARKED IMPROVEMENT.


NOW, THEN. I HAVE BUSINESS WITH TONY STARK.
DELICATE BUSINESS.
BUSINESS WHICH I DO NOT WISH TO SEE DISTURBED.

I DON'T MIND YOU CREATING *DISTRACTIONS* WITH YOUR LITTLE --


-- "*HARD EARNED EMPIRE*".

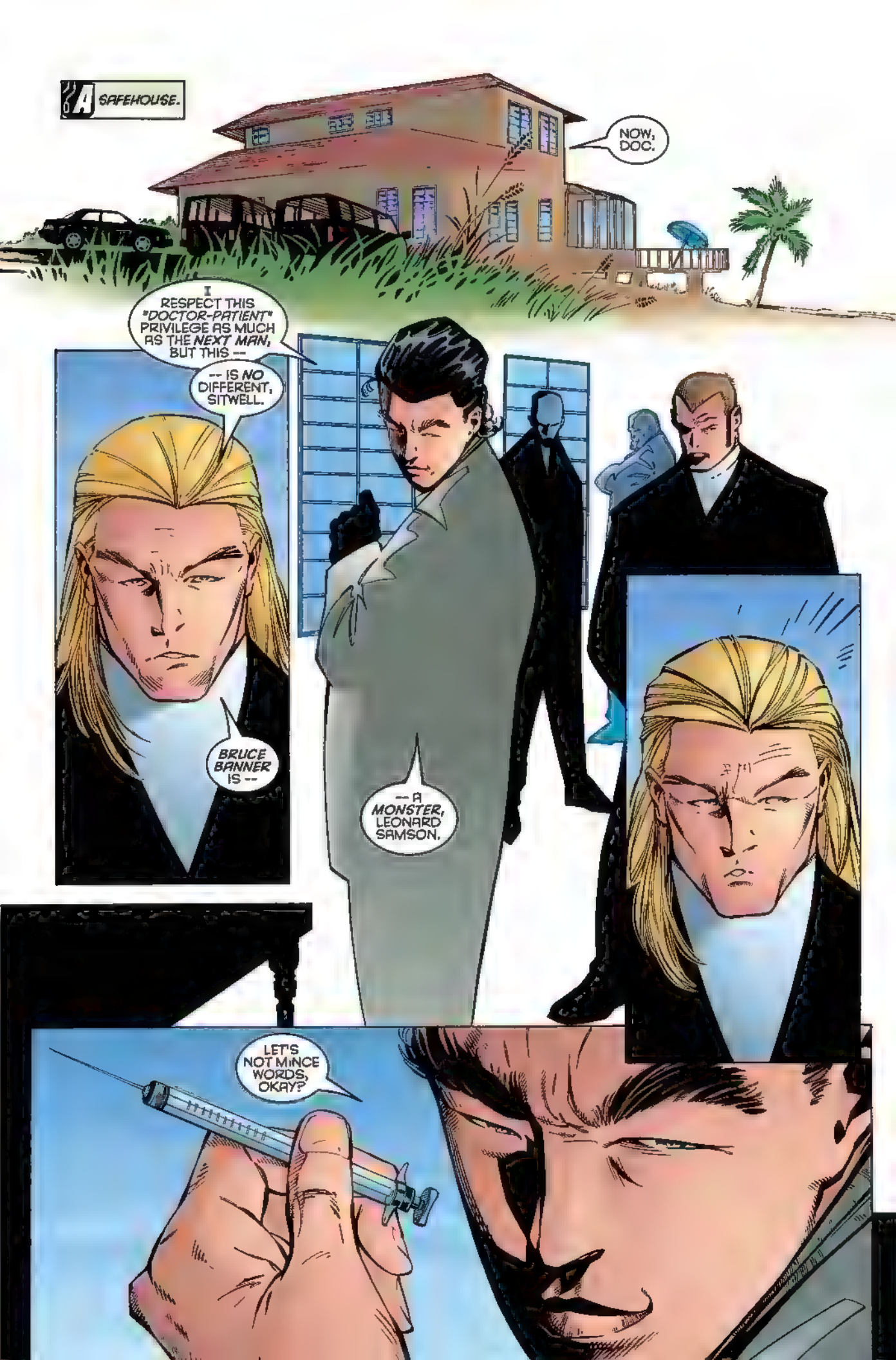
BUT, OVERSTEP YOUR BOUNDS AGAIN --
-- AND I WILL TEAR YOU --
ACK
LIMB
FROM
LIMB
URK
RGLE
FASTER THAN ANOTHER ONE COULD TAKE ITS PLACE!

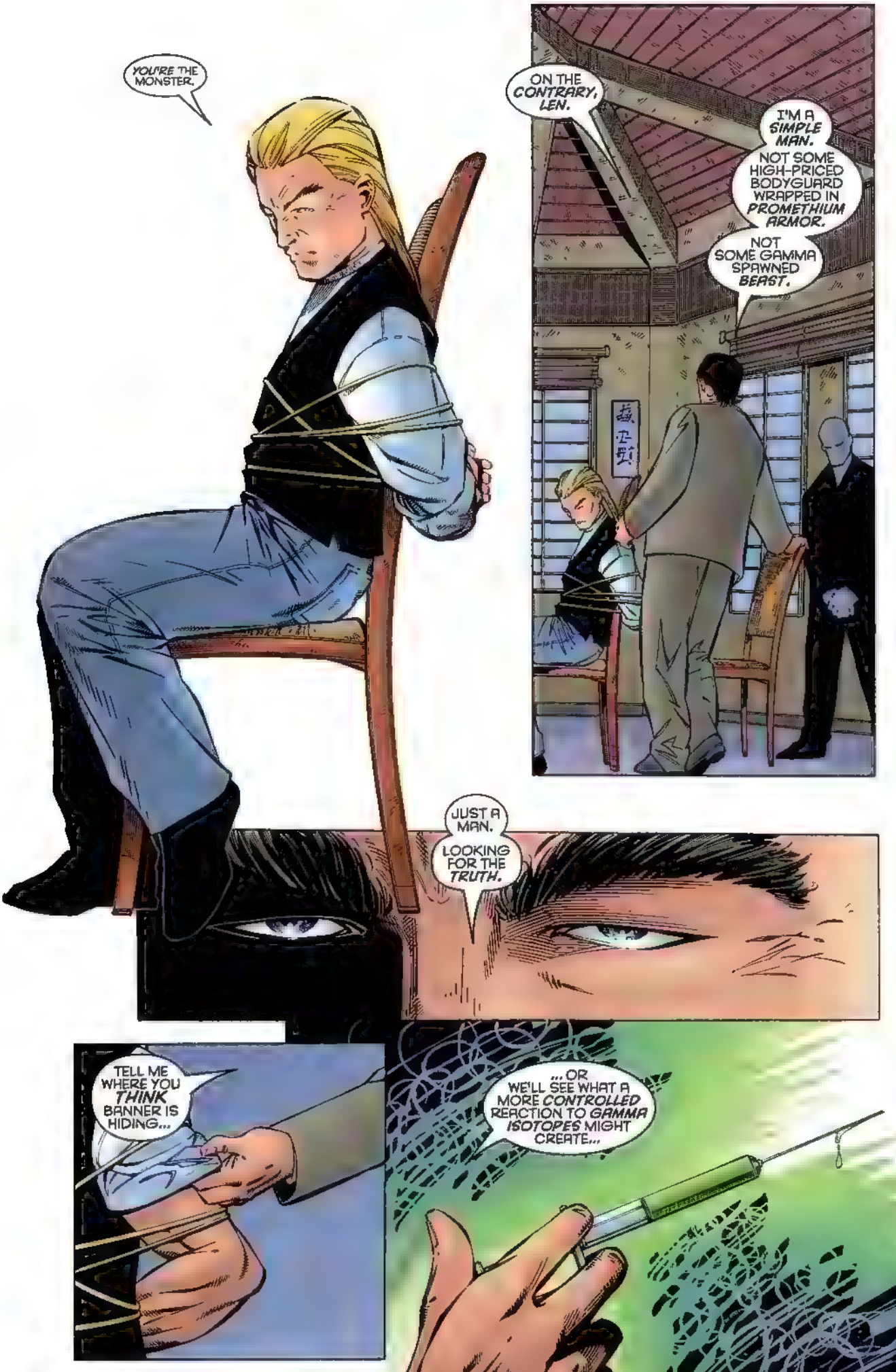
SUDDENLY...
AIR!
KAFF KAFF
DOES THIS MEAN WE CAN NOT BE *FRIENDS* ANYMORE?
MADAME HYDRA.
WE ARE SO MUCH MORE THAN *FRIENDS*.
MUCH MORE...
EACH TIME WE MEET, YOU TAKE A *DIFFERENT FORM*, "*MANDARIN*."
WHAT *SECRET* ARE YOU HIDING?
AND HOW CAN *HYDRA* USE IT TO ITS BEST ADVANTAGE?

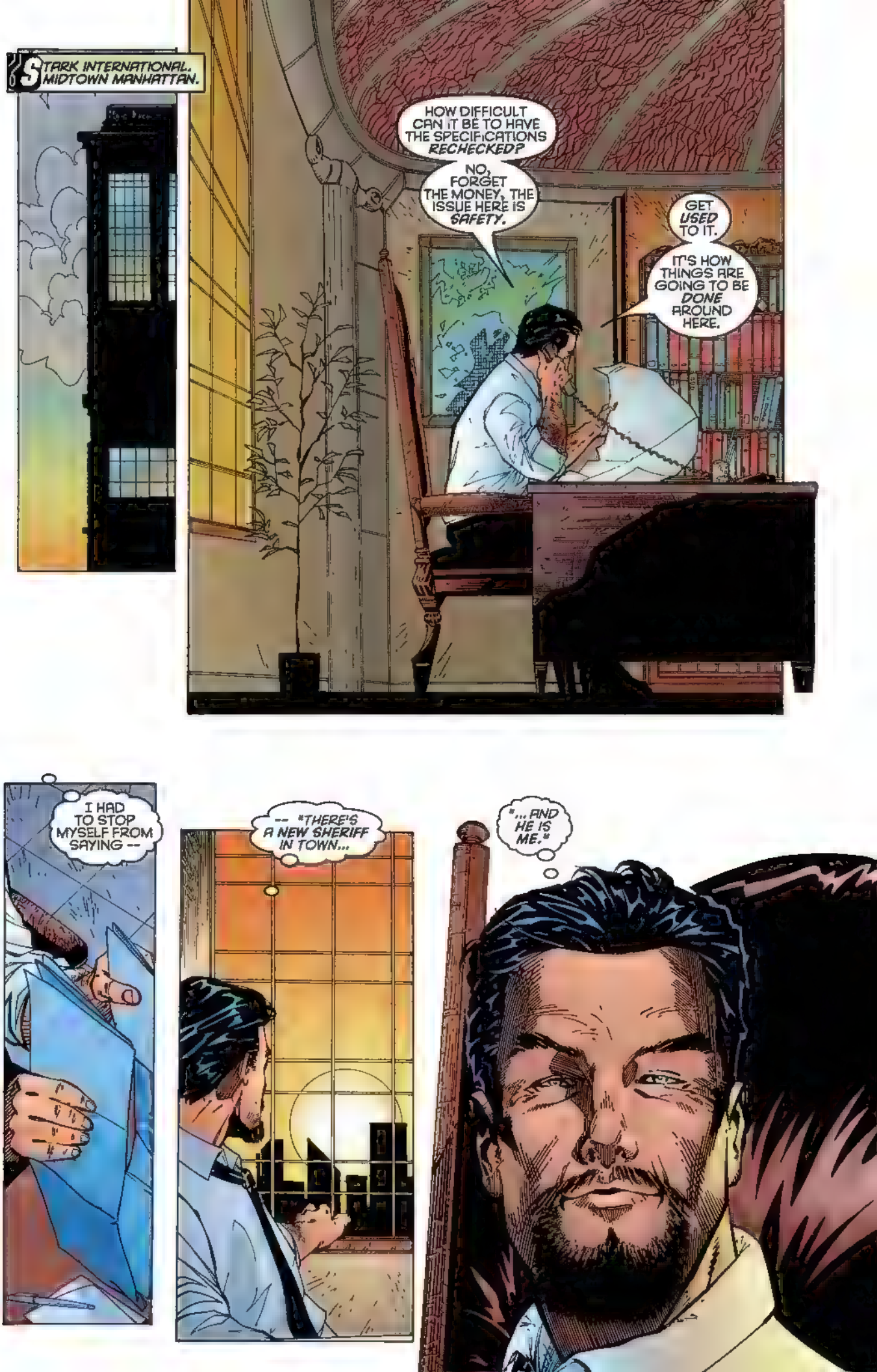
AVENGERS MANSION.
SEVERAL THOUSAND FEET BELOW.
A HOLE.
THOU HAS BROUGHT THE GOD OF THUNDER TO THE VERY NETHERWORLD OF THE AVENGERS MANSION --
-- TO SHOW ME THY HOLE?
IT'S NOT A HOLE, IT'S AN ARMORY.
I BUILT IT SO THE AVENGERS WOULD HAVE A SAFEHOUSE FOR THEIR WEPONRY.
MY ARMORED FRIEND, AS HOLES GO, IT COMPARES TO NONE.
AND I DO NOT MEAN TO BELITTLE THY EFFORTS --
-- BUT, IF WE ART TO BE AVENGERS, WHY WOULDST WE NEED A HOLE TO PUT OUR WEAPONS --
-- WHEN ANY TRUE WARRIOR NE'ER ALLOWS HIS WEAPON TO LEAVE HIS SIDE?
I --
-- NEVER MIND.
I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE DONE THIS WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA.

IRON MAN.
IN THESE PAST DAYS, THOU HAST DONE MUCH TO MAKE FOR COMFORTS TO THOSE THOU HARDLY KNOWS.
WE "AVENGERS."
IS THERE NOT *SOMETHING* THAT A GOD MIGHT DO TO LIGHTEN THE BURDEN I DOTH SENSE WITHIN THEE?
INCREDIBLE.
ONE MOMENT, HE HASN'T GOT THE *SLIGHTEST* IDEA WHAT I'M ABOUT --
-- AND THE NEXT ...
THERE ARE SOME THINGS, THOR, THAT EVEN A GOD CAN'T SOLVE.
JUST PART OF BEING... HUMAN, I GUESS.
THEN, HEED THIS SMALL BIT OF ADVICE FROM ONE WHO HAST LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW IT.
DO NOT *LOOK BACK IN ANGER.*
FOR IT IS ONLY IN THY *TOMORROWS* THAT THE ANSWERS LIE.
WOW.
YEP. FROM THE GOD OF WOW.

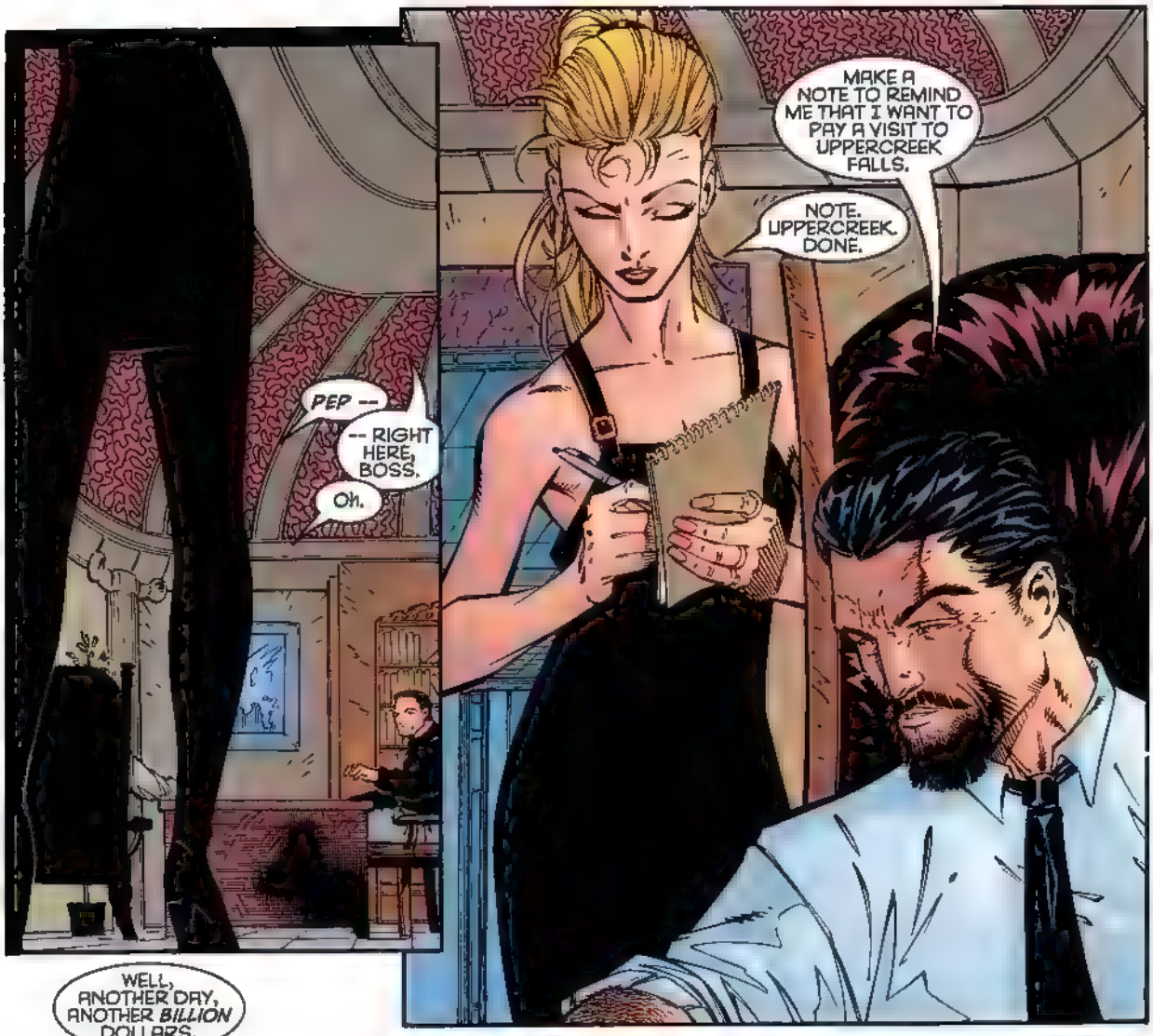
SO, THIS IS WHAT YOU DO NOW, Huh?
PAL AROUND WITH THUNDER GODS.
LIVING LEGENDS.
HELLCATS.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED ME TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE AVENGERS.
YEP. AND IT'S DOING YOU SOME GOOD.
BUT, I CAN'T HELP WONDERING...
... JUST WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO "AVENGE"?
WHERE DO I BEGIN?
C'MON, WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO.
SEND HAPPY HOGAN UP TO SEE ME.
YES, BOSS.
AND PEPPER.
DON'T GO WANDERING DOWN INTO THESE ACCESS TUNNELS AGAIN WITHOUT CHECKING WITH ME FIRST.
YES, BOSS...


A SAFEHOUSE.
NOW, DOC.
I RESPECT THIS "DOCTOR-PATIENT" PRIVILEGE AS MUCH AS THE NEXT MAN, BUT THIS --
-- IS NO DIFFERENT, SITWELL.
BRUCE BANNER IS --
-- A MONSTER, LEONARD SAMSON.
LET'S NOT MINCE WORDS, OKAY?

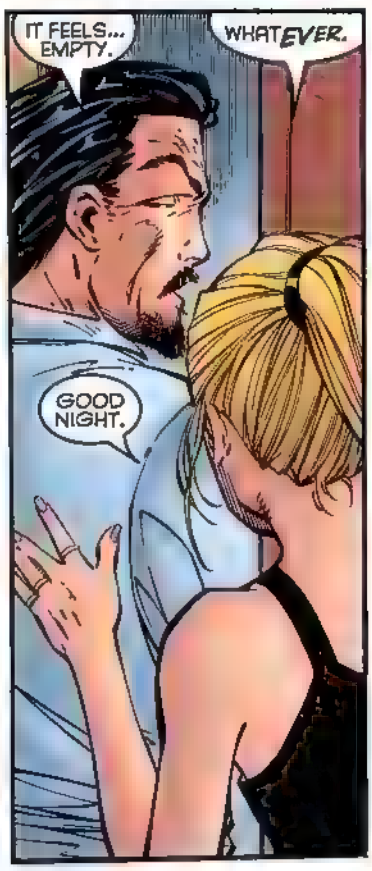

YOU'RE THE MONSTER.
ON THE CONTRARY, LEN.
I'M A SIMPLE MAN.
NOT SOME HIGH-PRICED BODYGUARD WRAPPED IN PROMETHIUM ARMOR.
NOT SOME GAMMA SPAWNED BEAST.
JUST A MAN.
LOOKING FOR THE TRUTH.
TELL ME WHERE YOU THINK BANNER IS HIDING...
... OR WE'LL SEE WHAT A MORE CONTROLLED REACTION TO GAMMA ISOTOPES MIGHT CREATE...

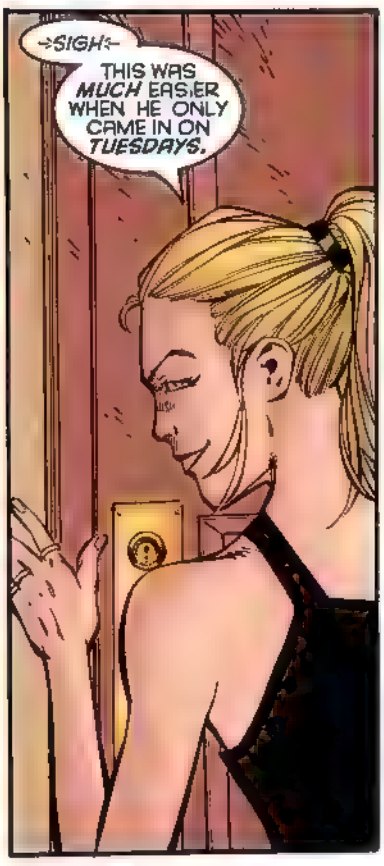

STARK INTERNATIONAL. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN.
HOW DIFFICULT CAN IT BE TO HAVE THE SPECIFICATIONS *RECHECKED?*
NO, FORGET THE MONEY. THE ISSUE HERE IS *SAFETY.*
GET *USED* TO IT.
IT'S HOW THINGS ARE GOING TO BE *DONE* AROUND HERE.
I HAD TO STOP MYSELF FROM SAYING --
-- *"THERE'S A NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN...*
"... AND HE IS ME."

DO YOU WANT THE GOOD NEWS FIRST, OR THE BAD NEWS?
I THOUGHT I PAY YOU TO KEEP ME *AWAY* FROM THE BAD NEWS, HAPPY.
FAIR ENOUGH.
THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THIS *"IRON MAN"* YOU'VE HIRED...
... THEY LIKE HIM.
THE MEDIA. THE PUBLIC. THE WHOLE MAGILLA.
PARTICULARLY SINCE YOU DECIDED TO BANKROLL THOSE *"AVENGERS"*.
AND THE *BAD* NEWS...?
IT'S ABOUT *UPPERCREEK FALLS*.
THE TOWN WHERE PARKS FIBREOPTICS WAS BEFORE YOU... Um...
... SHAFTED THEM?
TO PICK A WORD, YEAH.
THEY'RE STILL A LITTLE... *DISAPPOINTED* WITH YOU, TONY.
THAT'S OKAY, HAPPY.
SO AM I.

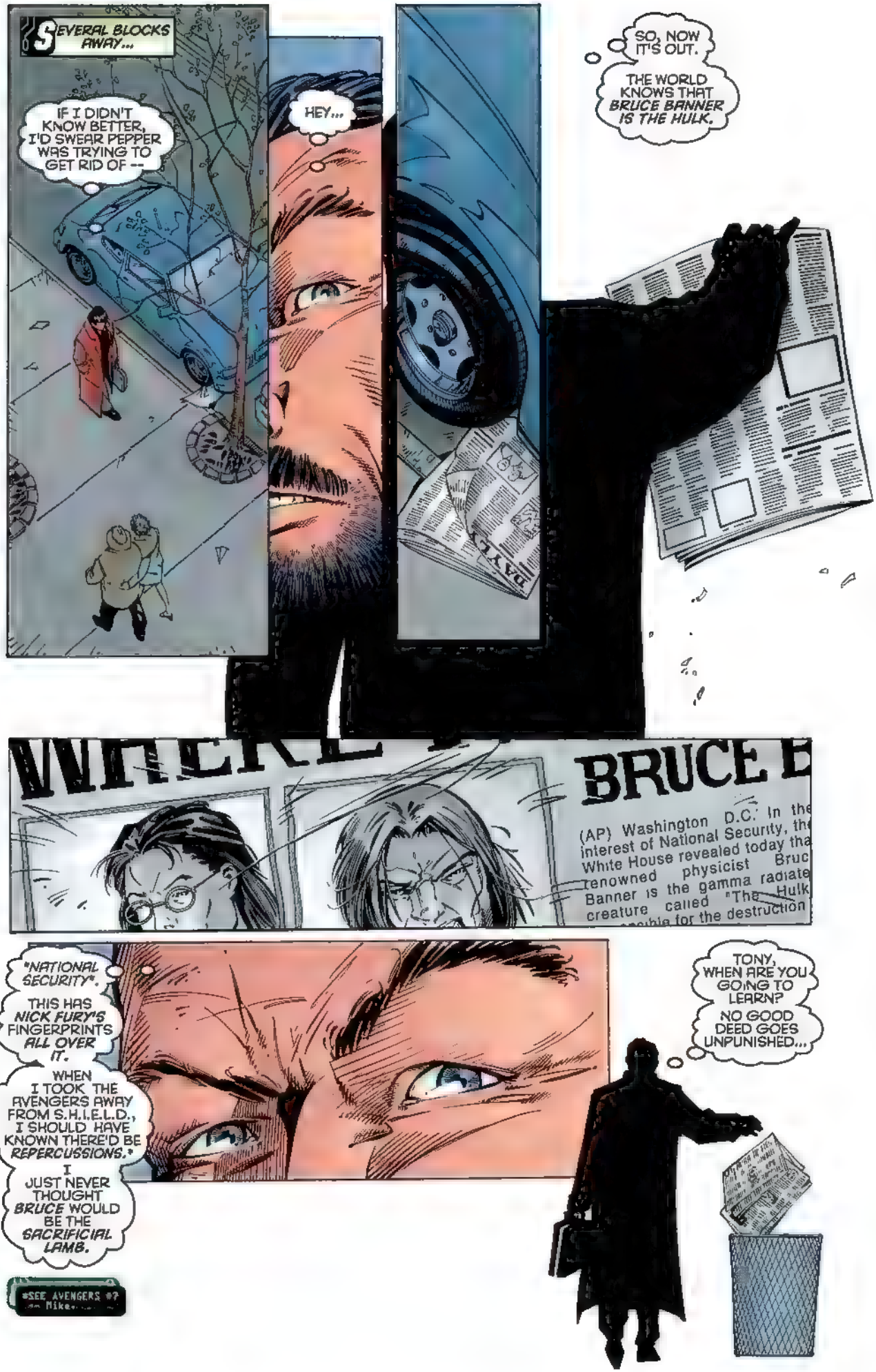

PEP --
-- RIGHT HERE, BOSS.
Oh.
MAKE A NOTE TO REMIND ME THAT I WANT TO PAY A VISIT TO UPPERCREEK FALLS.
NOTE. UPPERCREEK. DONE.

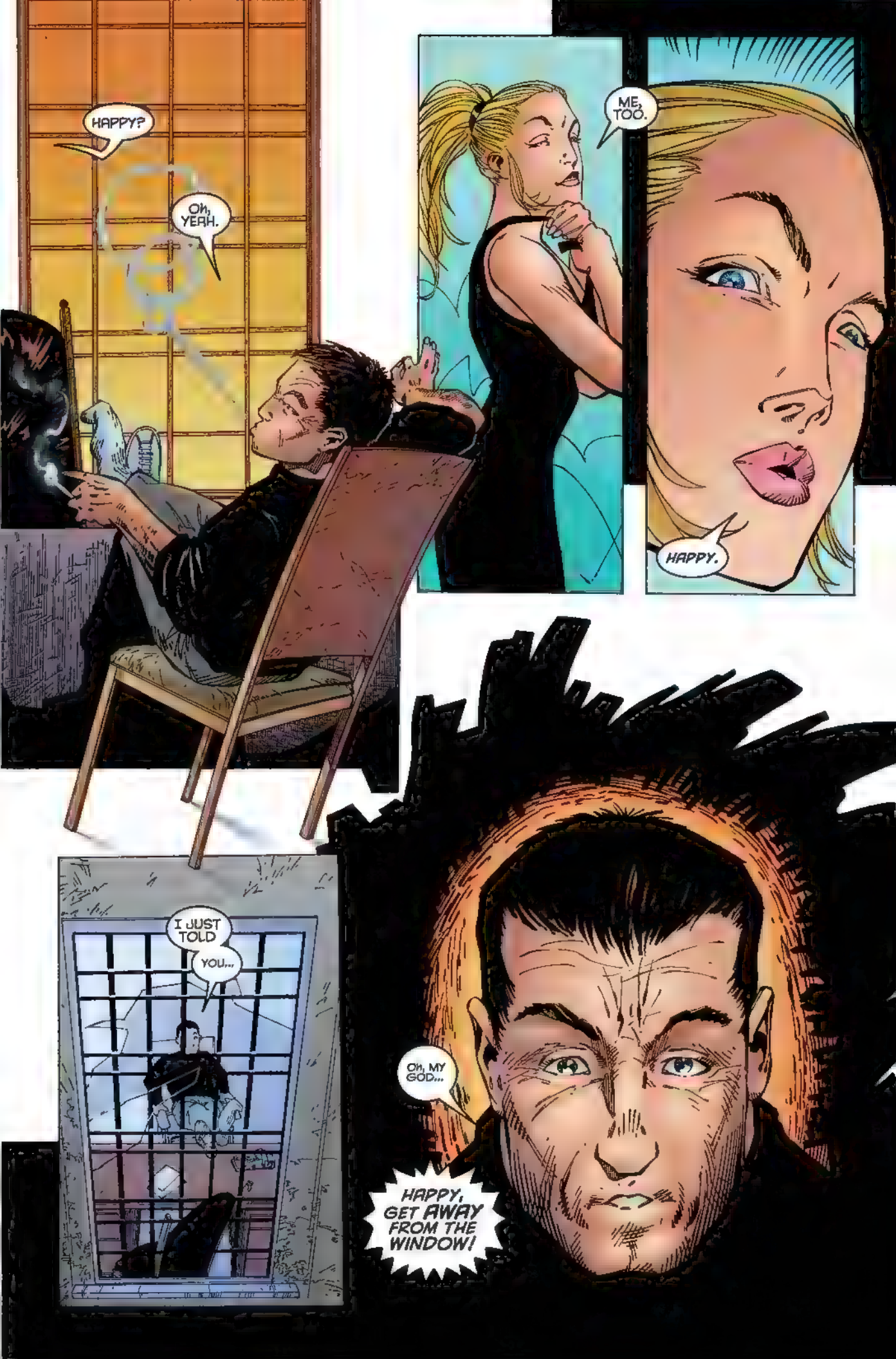
WELL, ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER *BILLION* DOLLARS.
YOU'VE GOT A *MASSAGE* SCHEDULED IN FIFTEEN MINUTES AT YOUR PLACE.
I PACKED ALL YOUR *HOMEWORK* IN YOUR BRIEFCASE.


IT FEELS... EMPTY.
WHAT*EVER*.
GOOD NIGHT.


-SIGH-
THIS WAS *MUCH* EASIER WHEN HE ONLY CAME IN ON *TUESDAYS*.

PEPPER...
HAPPY...
PEP-MMMM-PER.
HAAAPY.
PEPPER...!


SEVERAL BLOCKS AWAY...
IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, I'D SWEAR PEPPER WAS TRYING TO GET RID OF --
HEY...
SO, NOW IT'S OUT.
THE WORLD KNOWS THAT BRUCE BANNER IS THE HULK.
BRUCE B
(AP) Washington D.C. In the interest of National Security, the White House revealed today tha renowned physicist Bruc Banner is the gamma radiate creature called "The Hulk
"NATIONAL SECURITY".
THIS HAS NICK FURY'S FINGERPRINTS ALL OVER IT.
WHEN I TOOK THE AVENGERS AWAY FROM S.H.I.E.L.D., I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THERE'D BE REPERCUSSIONS.*
I JUST NEVER THOUGHT BRUCE WOULD BE THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB.
*SEE AVENGERS #?
Mike...
TONY, WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO LEARN?
NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED...


HAPPY?
OH, YEAH.
ME, TOO.
HAPPY.
I JUST TOLD YOU...
OH, MY GOD...
HAPPY, GET AWAY FROM THE WINDOW!

WARROOM
THAT CAME FROM THE OFFICE.
AND ME WITHOUT MY --
-- ARMOR?!
PEPPER.
I COULD KISS YOU.

"BIO-SENSORS."
SOURCE: POTTS, PEPPER. HOGAN, HAPPY.
LOCATION --
GOT IT.
EASY NOW. EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE --
H-HE KILLED H-HAPPY..?
HE KILLED HAPPY.
WHO KILLED HAPPY?

I DID. I THOUGHT HE WAS YOU, TONY
IF THAT MATTERS
NEXT: REBEL?!

MARVEL COMICS
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
IRON MAN
JUNE '97
REBEL YELL!
LOEB
PORTACIO
JD/WILLIAMS
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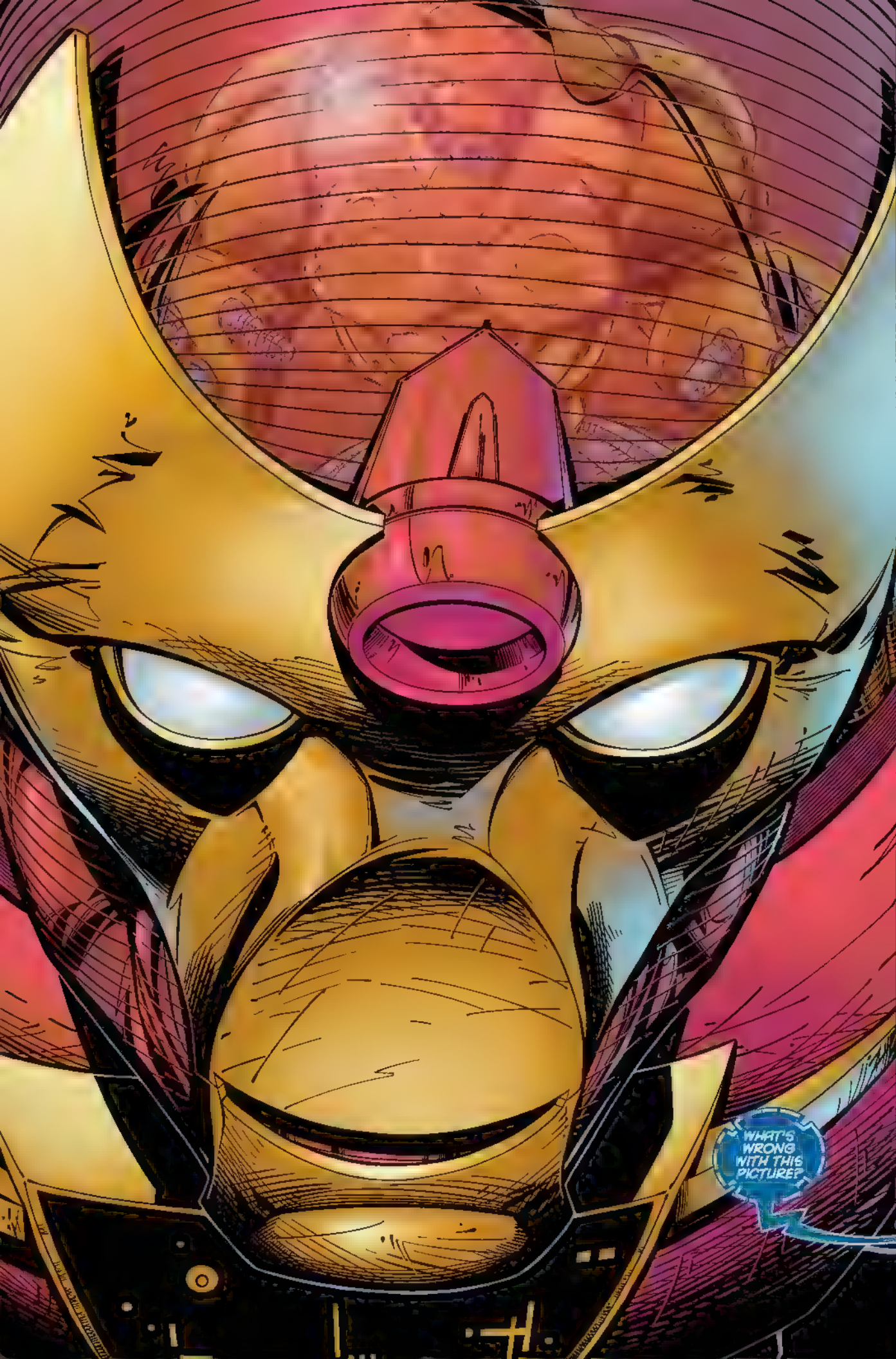
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

THE BATTLE NOBODY EXPECTED!
Stan Lee Presents
REBEL, REBEL
ZZAK
IT'S ME, TONY.
YOUR BEST FRIEND.
YOU THOUGHT I WAS DEAD.
BUT I'M LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN YOUR LIFE, TONY.
BACK TO HAUNT YOU!
UNNGH!
JEPH LOEB
SCRIPT
WHILCE PORTACIO
PENCILS
JO & SCOTT WILLIAMS
INKS
RICHARD FRIEND, ARMANDO DURRUTHY & PETER GUZMAN
INK ASSISTS
MARTIN JIMENEZ
COLORS
WILDSTORM FX
COMPUTER COLORS
RICHARD STARKINGS 'N'COMICRAFT/AD
LETTERS
RUBEN DIAZ
EDITOR
BOB HARRAS
EDITOR IN CHIEF
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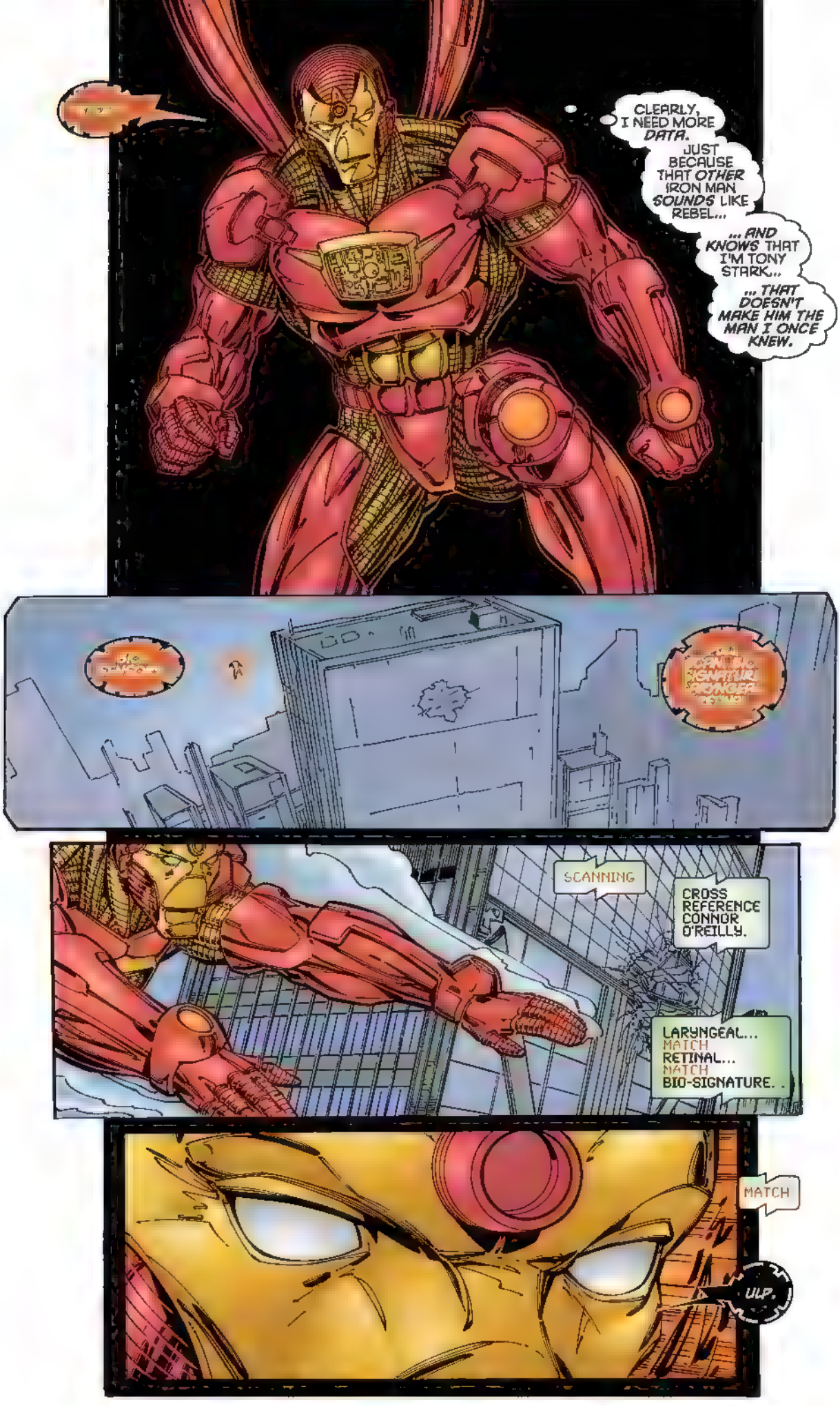
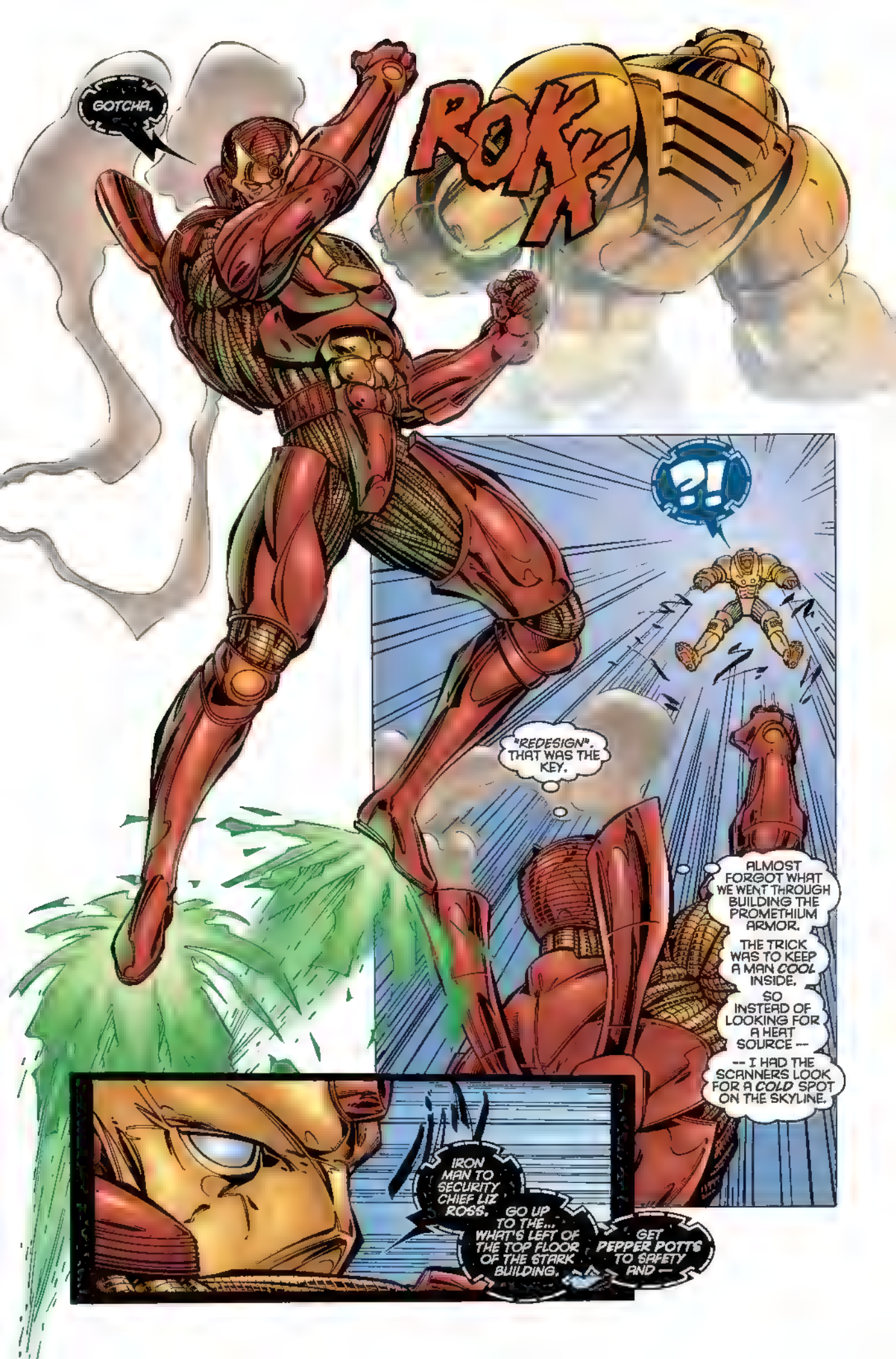
TONY, HIT "REWIND" AND "PLAY."
REBEL.
SHOULD BE DEAD.
ISN'T.
HAPPY HOGAN.
SHOULDN'T BE DEAD.
IS.*
*Last issue ... RUBEN.
CRASH
Um... JIM?
WELCOME ABOARD, RUBEN.
NOW GRAB SOME FLOOR WHILE YOU STILL CAN!
WELL, THAT'S ENOUGH OF THAT.
GYRO SYSTEM ACTIVATE
REAR THRUSTERS


CLEARLY, I NEED MORE DATA.
JUST BECAUSE THAT OTHER IRON MAN SOUNDS LIKE REBEL...
... AND KNOWS THAT I'M TONY STARK...
... THAT DOESN'T MAKE HIM THE MAN I ONCE KNEW.
SCANNING
CROSS REFERENCE CONNOR O'REILLY.
LARYNGEAL... MATCH
RETINAL... MATCH
BIO-SIGNATURE. .
MATCH
ULP.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, PAL?
BAD NEWS ON THE BIO-NET?
JUST FINDING OUT I'M NOT A CLONE?
NOT AN EVIL TWIN?
JUST YOUR OL' COLLEGE ROOM-MATE —
WHO YOU LET PUT ON ARMOR THAT WAS FAULTY!
WERE YOU JEALOUS, TONY?
WAS THAT IT?
AFRAID THAT I MIGHT BECOME THE GOLDEN AVENGER AND NOT YOU?!
LIKE IN SCHOOL, TONY.
EVERYTHING CAME EASY TO YOU.
YOU HAD THE MONEY. THE LOOKS. THE WORKS.
WHY'D YOU EVEN INCLUDE ME IN YOUR "ATOMIC KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE" —
— JUST TO MAKE YOU LOOK SMARTER?!
MISTER.
GET OUT OF MY —

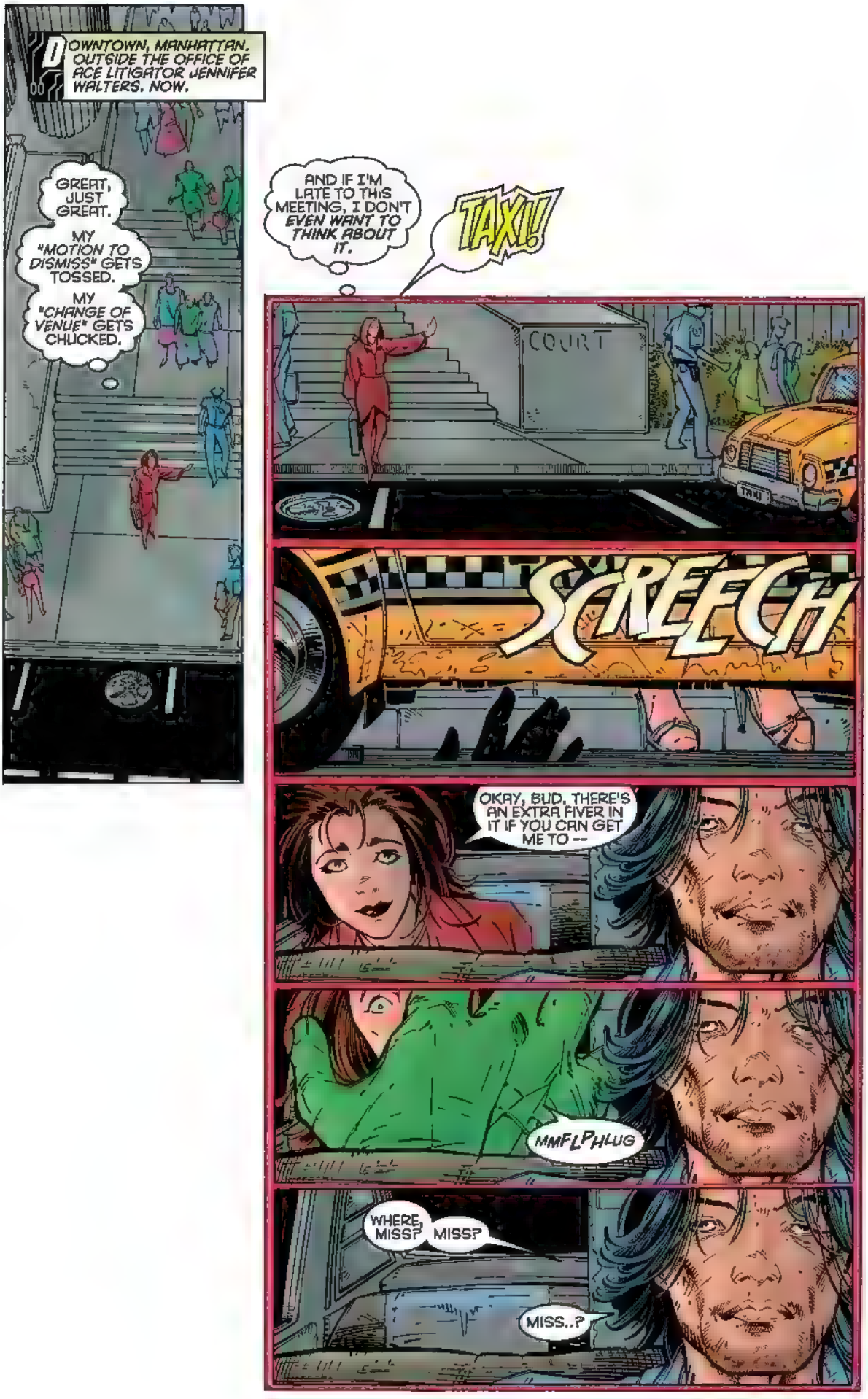
-- HEAD.
GONE.
THIS IS TOO WEIRD.
WHOEVER I'M DEALING WITH KNOWS WAY TOO MUCH ABOUT ME.
FL. INTERNAL FREQUENCIES GO TO RANDOM.
THAT OUGHT TO KEEP HIM FROM BROADCASTING IN MY EARS.
NOW, ASSUMING THIS ISN'T A GHOST I'M DEALING WITH --
-- MY ASSAILANT HAS SOME KIND OF CLOAKING DEVICE THAT I DIDN'T DESIGN.
SCANNING
BIO-SENSORS.
COLOR SPECTRUM SENSORS.
HEAT SENSORS.
INFRARED SENSORS.
NEGATIVE
GRRRR.

TAP TAP
WHAM
BLIP
RADAR: NEGATI
MOTION: NEGAT
SONAR: NEGATI
GONE.
O-KAY.
GOING TO HAVE TO USE MY BRAIN TO GET A HANDLE ON THIS --
-- BEFORE IT GETS BEATEN OUT OF ME!
WHOEVER IT WAS THAT REDESIGNED YOUR ARMOR DID A FINE JOB.
SHIFTING ALL RESERVE POWER TO MY FIST...

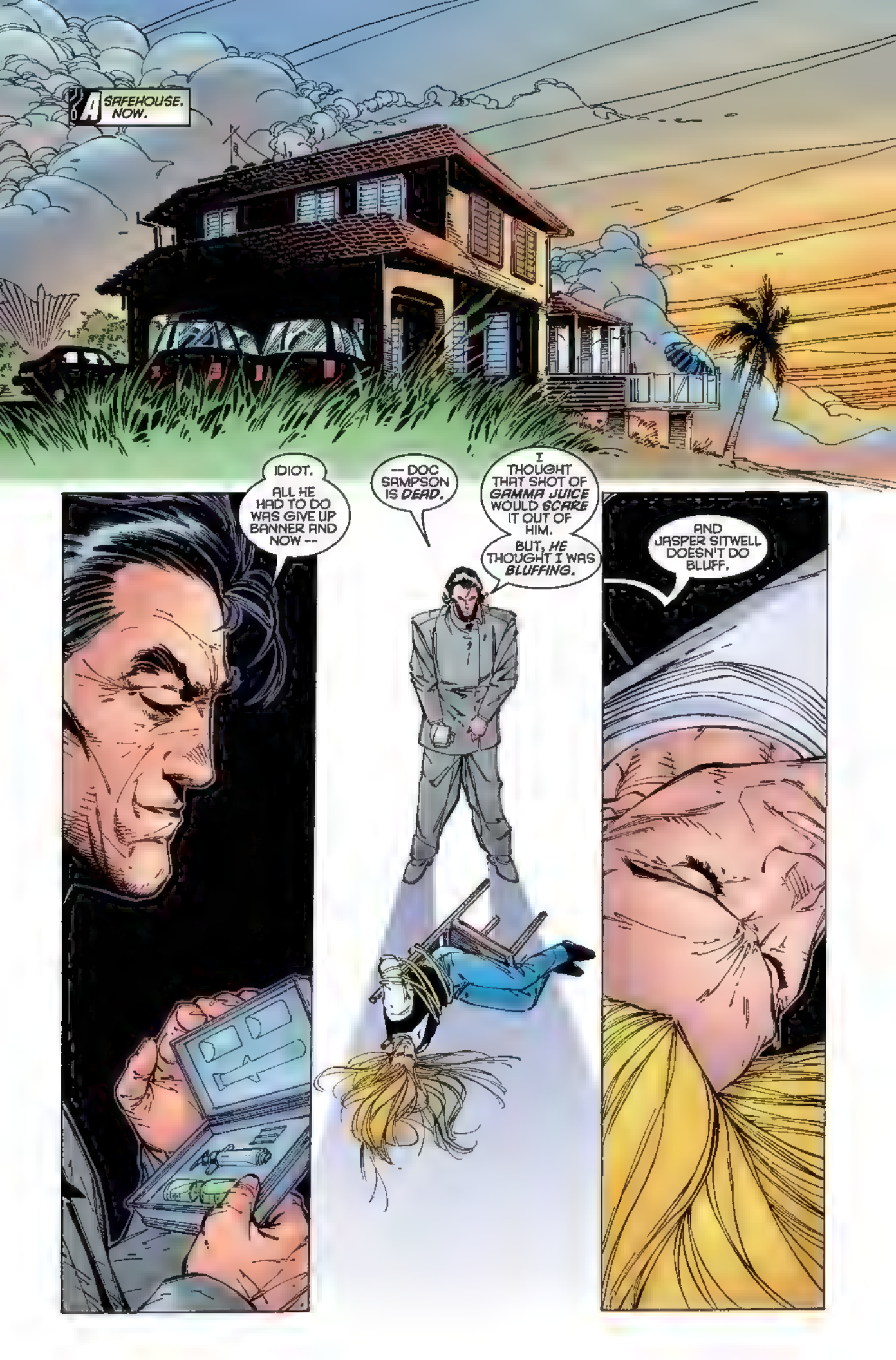

GOTCHA.
ROK
?!
"REDESIGN". THAT WAS THE KEY.
ALMOST FORGOT WHAT WE WENT THROUGH BUILDING THE PROMETHIUM ARMOR.
THE TRICK WAS TO KEEP A MAN *COOL* INSIDE.
SO INSTEAD OF LOOKING FOR A HEAT SOURCE --
-- I HAD THE SCANNERS LOOK FOR A *COLD* SPOT ON THE SKYLINE.
IRON MAN TO SECURITY CHIEF LIZ ROSS.
GO UP TO THE... WHAT'S LEFT OF THE TOP FLOOR OF THE STARK BUILDING.
GET PEPPER POTTS TO SAFETY AND --

-- THIS IS LIZ ROSS.
NOT ONLY AM I ALREADY THERE.
BUT, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I KNOW HOW TO DO MY JOB.
"IRON MAN."
NEVER SAID YOU DIDN'T Ms. ROSS.
PEPPER.
I NEED YOU OFF THIS ROOF.
SECURITY PROCEDURES ARE --
I DON'T CARE ABOUT SECURITY.
THE MAN I LOVED IS DEAD AND IF YOU HAD ONE SHRED OF HUMANITY IN YOU --
SLAP
YOU'RE BECOMING HYSTERICAL.
AND I NEED YOU OFF THIS ROOF.

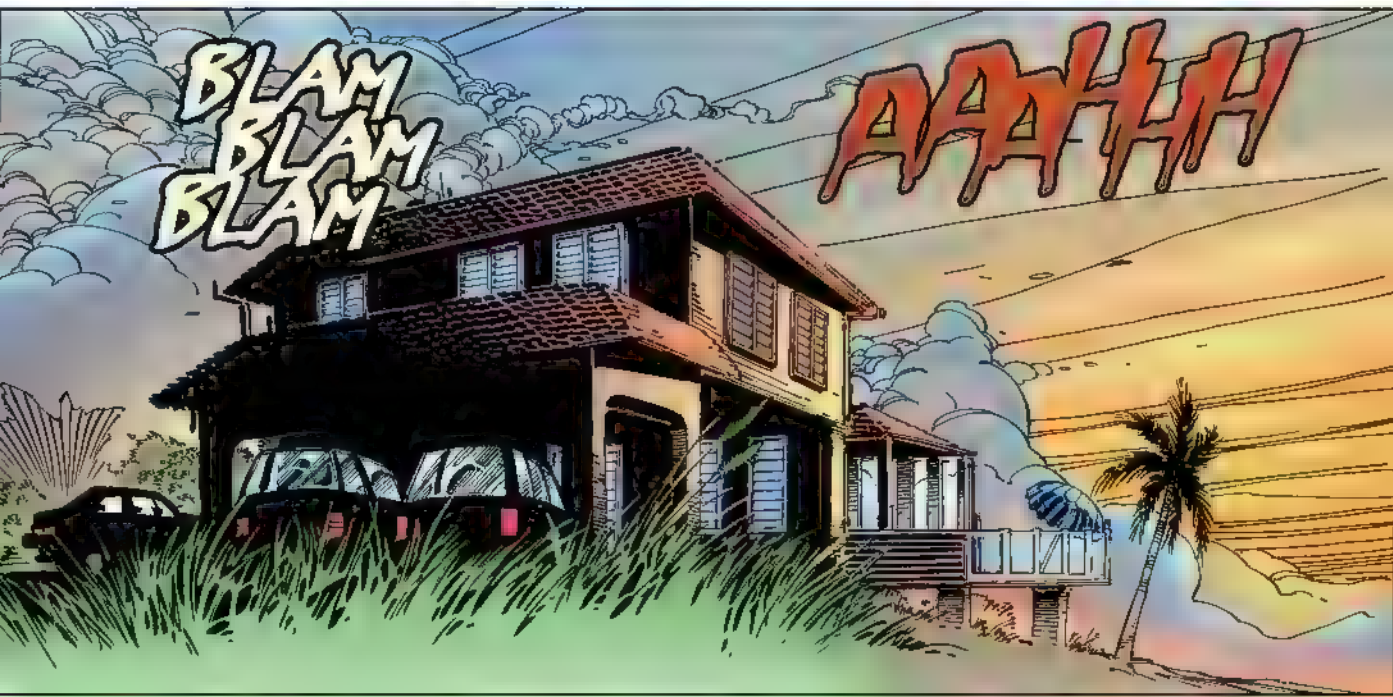
BAFF
SHUT UP!
SHUT UP!
JUST SHUT UP!
MS. POTTS.
I'M GOING TO *FORGET* THIS LITTLE INCIDENT.
I SUGGEST YOU DO THE SAME.
LIZ --
-- MY GOD --
-- WHAT'S *HAPPENED* TO YOU?!


DOWNTOWN, MANHATTAN. OUTSIDE THE OFFICE OF ACE LITIGATOR JENNIFER WALTERS. NOW.
GREAT, JUST GREAT.
MY "MOTION TO DISMISS" GETS TOSSED.
MY "CHANGE OF VENUE" GETS CHUCKED.
AND IF I'M LATE TO THIS MEETING, I DON'T EVEN WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT.
TAXI!!
COURT
TAXI
SCREECH
OKAY, BUD, THERE'S AN EXTRA FIVER IN IT IF YOU CAN GET ME TO --
MMFLPHLUG
WHERE, MISS? MISS?
MISS..?

BELOW.
OH, NO.
BRUCE..?
NOT BRUCE.
HULK.
HULK'S SKIN BURNS.
HULK KNOWS YOU.
HULK KNOWS YOU WILL HELP HULK.
HELP..?
YES... I'LL HELP YOU, HULK...


A SAFEHOUSE. NOW.
IDIOT. ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS GIVE UP BANNER AND NOW --
-- DOC SAMPSON IS DEAD.
I THOUGHT THAT SHOT OF GAMMA JUICE WOULD SCARE IT OUT OF HIM.
BUT, HE THOUGHT I WAS BLUFFING.
AND JASPER SITWELL DOESN'T DO BLUFF.

GET RID OF THE BODY.
HE'S JUST ONE BIG *TOXIC DUMP* NOW ANYWAY.
I'LL MEET YOU ALL BACK AT S.I.
-OOMPH.-
HEY, GEMME A HAND HERE.
FOR A LITTLE JOE, THIS GUY WEIGHS A TON.

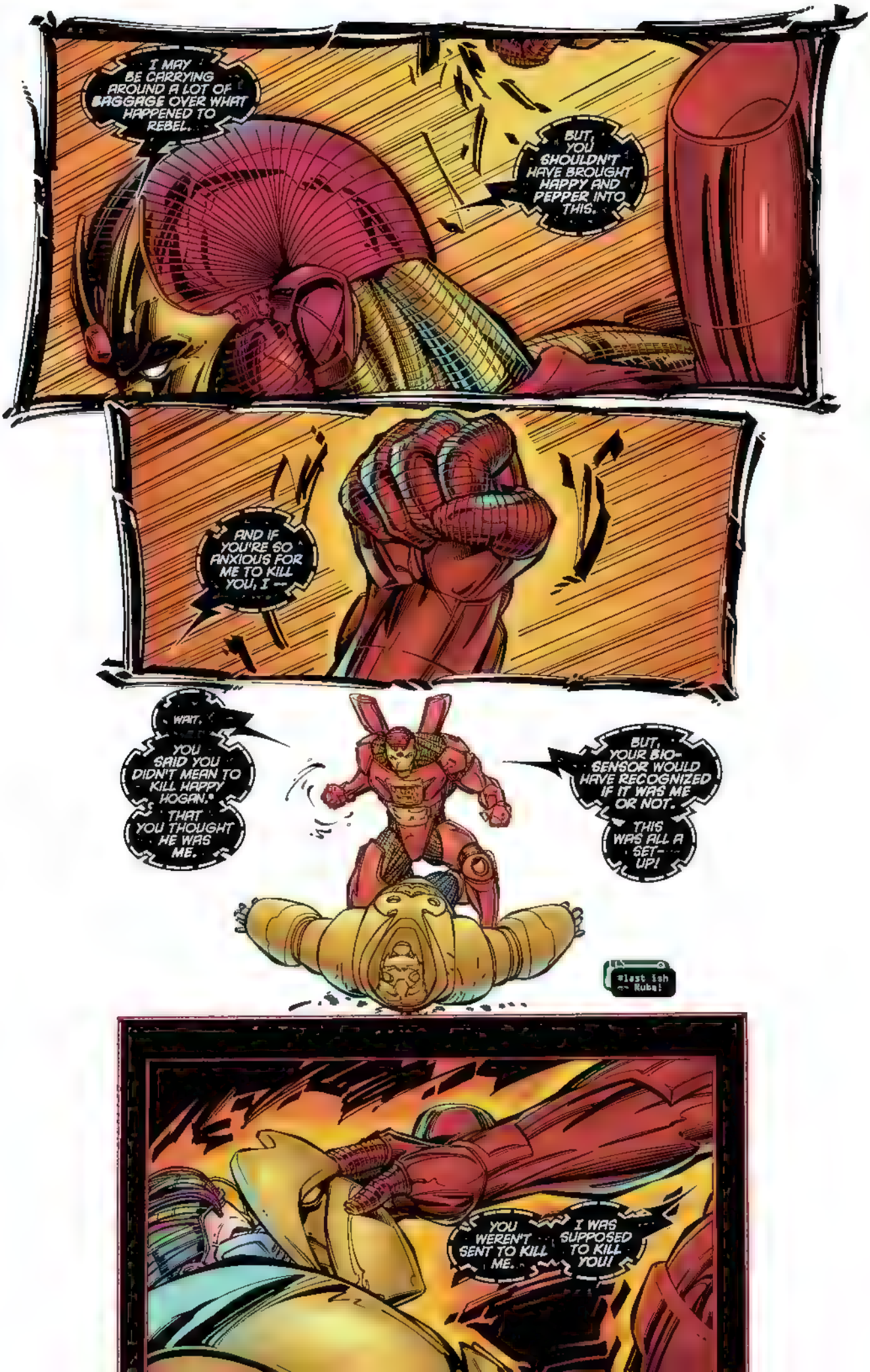

BLAM BLAM BLAM
AAHH

MIDTOWN. SOON.
CLEAR THE YARD! CLEAR THE FREAKIN' YARD!
WET PAINT
WE DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS!
SOMEONE ELSE IS CONTROLLING YOU --
THAT'D MAKE THIS EASY FOR YOU, HUH, TONY?
JUST BLAME IT ON SOMEBODY ELSE

WELL, IT'S NOT GOING TO GO DOWN THAT WAY.
YOU WANT TO STOP ME, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO KILL ME.
OTHERWISE, ONE-BY-ONE, I'M GOING TO KILL EVERYONE CLOSE TO YOU.
IKE HAPPY HOGAN.
REBEL...
PEPPER POTTS.
WHAM
WOKKK
...THAT'S ENOUGH!

PING
PSIONIC FREQUENCY LOCATED AND LOCKED.
FINALLY!
FREEZE
WHAT'S THE MATTER, REB?
NEED AN OIL CAN?
GIRDER
THUMP

YOU ALMOST HAD ME, "FRIEND".
WHAT IS IT THEY SAY? "REVENGE IS A DISH BEST SERVED COLD."
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
BASH!
OR WHAT YOU ARE.
BLOOM


I MAY BE CARRYING AROUND A LOT OF BAGGAGE OVER WHAT HAPPENED TO REBEL.
BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BROUGHT HAPPY AND PEPPER INTO THIS.
AND IF YOU'RE SO ANXIOUS FOR ME TO KILL YOU, I --
WAIT. YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T MEAN TO KILL HAPPY HOGAN. THAT YOU THOUGHT HE WAS ME.
BUT, YOUR BIO-SENSOR WOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED IF IT WAS ME OR NOT. THIS WAS ALL A SET-- UP!
Blast ish -- Rube!
YOU WEREN'T SENT TO KILL ME.
I WAS SUPPOSED TO KILL YOU!

REBEL.
IT IS YOU.
WHO DID THIS TO YOU —
— AND WHY?!
TONY... HELP ME...
FLASHBACK WITH US TO
The First
IRON MAN

MARVEL COMICS
IRON MAN
JULY '97 9
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
LOEB
BENJAMIN
JD/RAPMUND
BROTHERS IN ARMOR!
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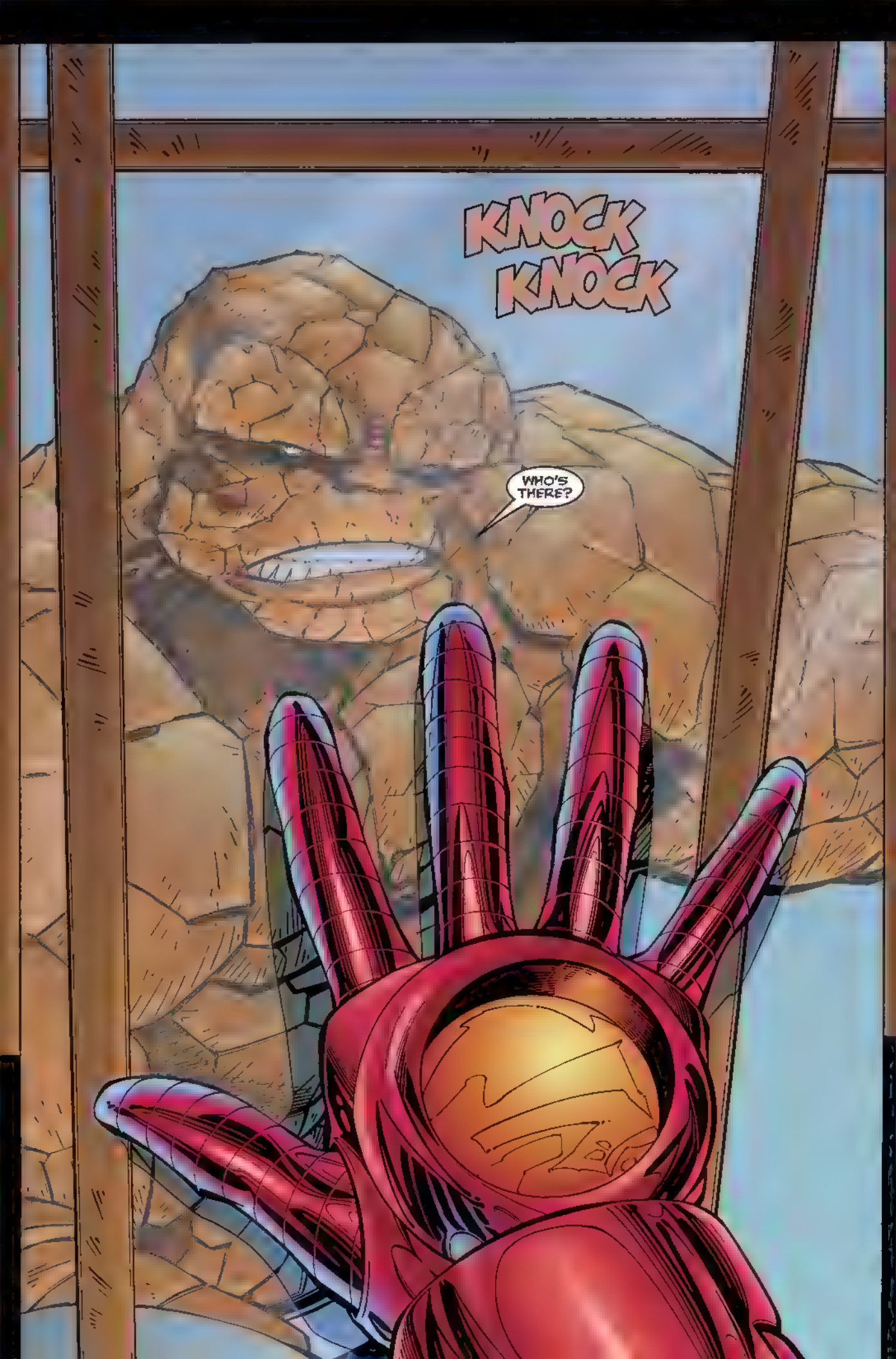
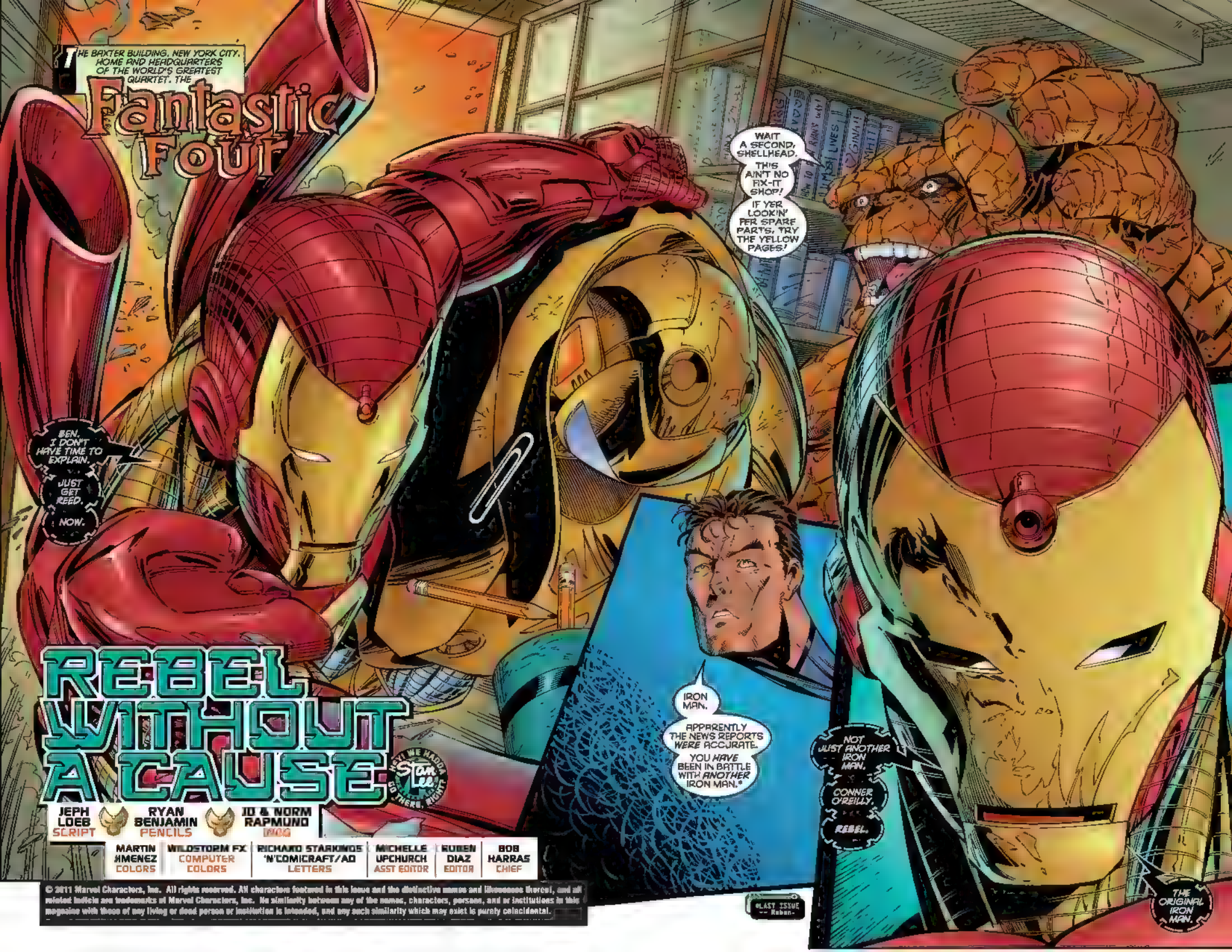
SHOEMAKER '97
JR


KNOCK KNOCK
WHO'S THERE?


THE BAXTER BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY. HOME AND HEADQUARTERS OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST QUARTET. THE
Fantastic Four
WAIT A SECOND, SHELLHEAD. THIS AIN'T NO FIX-IT SHOP! IF YER LOOKIN' FER SPARE PARTS, TRY THE YELLOW PAGES!
BEN. I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EXPLAIN. JUST GET REED. NOW.
IRON MAN. APPARENTLY THE NEWS REPORTS WERE ACCURATE. YOU HAVE BEEN IN BATTLE WITH ANOTHER IRON MAN.
NOT JUST ANOTHER IRON MAN. CONNER O'REILLY. REBEL.
THE ORIGINAL IRON MAN.
LAST ISSUE -- Ruban-
REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE
WELL WE HADDA DO THERE, RIGHT?
JEPH LOEB SCRIPT
RYAN BENJAMIN PENCILS
JD & NORM RAPMUND INKS
MARTIN JIMENEZ COLORS
WILDSTORM FX COMPUTER COLORS
RICHARD STARKINGS 'N'COMICRAFT/AD LETTERS
MICHELLE UPCHURCH ASST EDITOR
RUBEN DIAZ EDITOR
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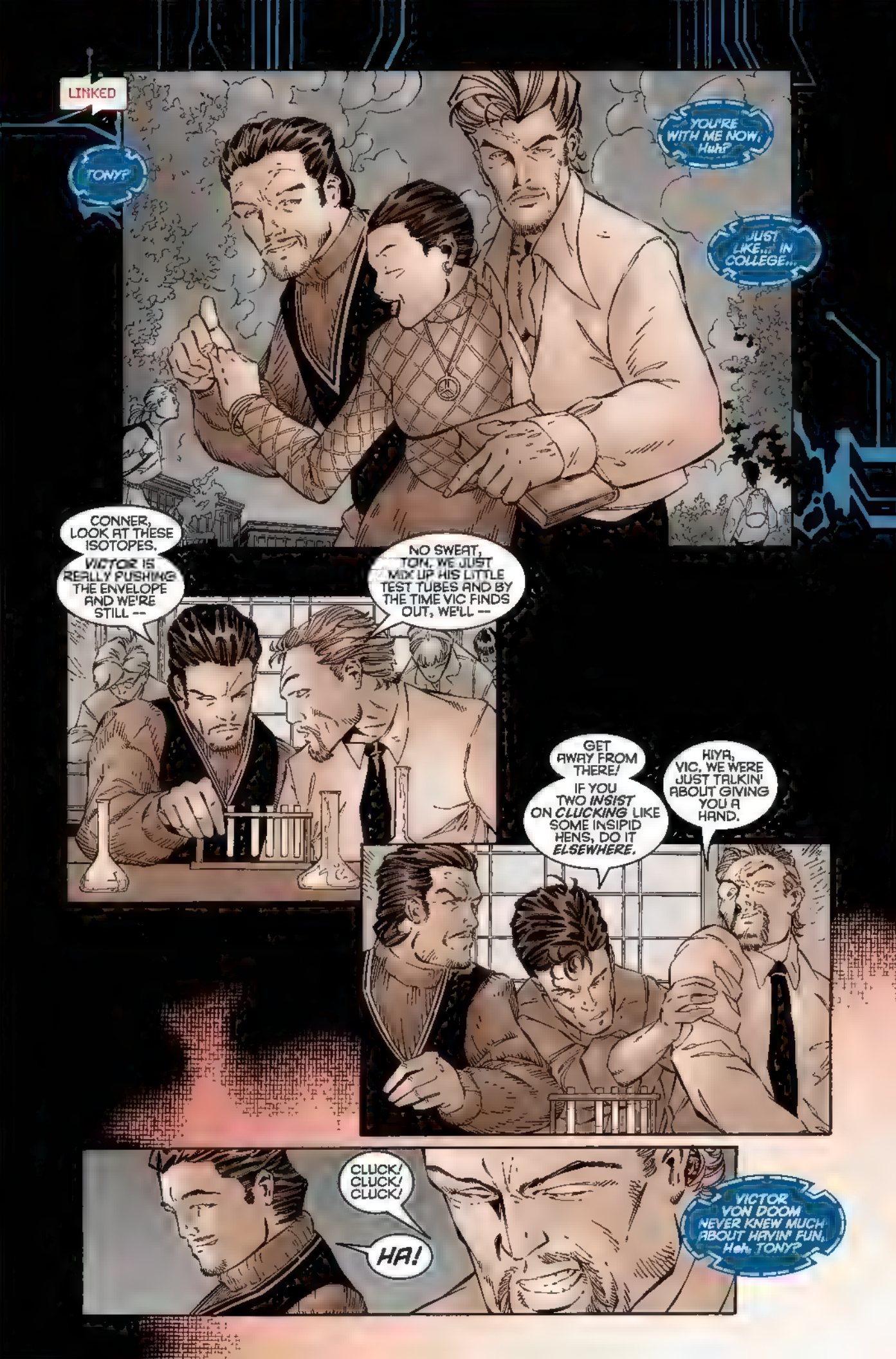
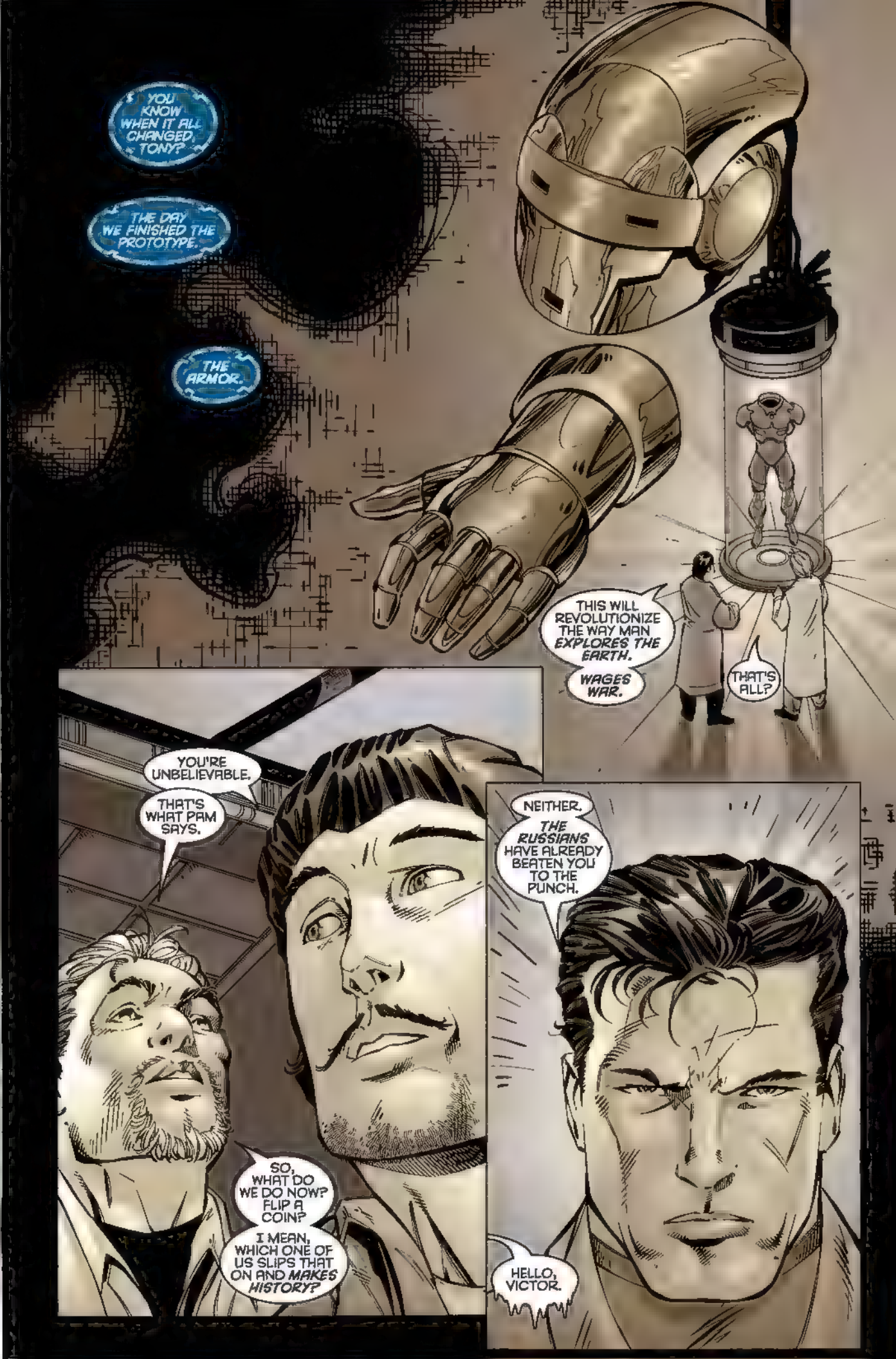
HIS VITAL SIGNS ARE DROPPING.
CAN YOU REMOVE HIS HELMET WITHOUT FURTHER JEOPARDIZING HIS LIFE?
HE'S MORE MACHINE THAN MAN NOW. BUT, YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME SAVE HIM.
SOMEONE DID THIS TO HIM, REED. AND I'M GOING TO FIND OUT WHO.
DURING OUR FIGHT, I MANAGED TO INTERFACE WITH HIS PSIONIC ARMOR CONTROL.
IF I HARDWIRE MY POWER SOURCE DIRECTLY INTO HIS —
-- YOU'LL LITERALLY BECOME REBEL'S LIFE SUPPORT.
YOU MUST REALIZE THAT IF HE DIES --
YES! THEN, I'LL DIE TOO...
PING
PSI-LINK IN 3, 2, 1...


LINKED
TONY?
YOU'RE WITH ME NOW, Huh?
JUST LIKE... IN COLLEGE...
CONNER, LOOK AT THESE ISOTOPES.
VICTOR IS REALLY PUSHING THE ENVELOPE AND WE'RE STILL --
NO SWEAT, TON, WE JUST MIX UP HIS LITTLE TEST TUBES AND BY THE TIME VIC FINDS OUT, WE'LL --
GET AWAY FROM THERE!
IF YOU TWO INSIST ON CLUCKING LIKE SOME INSIPID HENS, DO IT ELSEWHERE.
HIYA, VIC. WE WERE JUST TALKIN' ABOUT GIVING YOU A HAND.
CLUCK! CLUCK! CLUCK!
HA!
VICTOR VON DOOM NEVER KNEW MUCH ABOUT HAVIN' FUN, Heh, TONY?

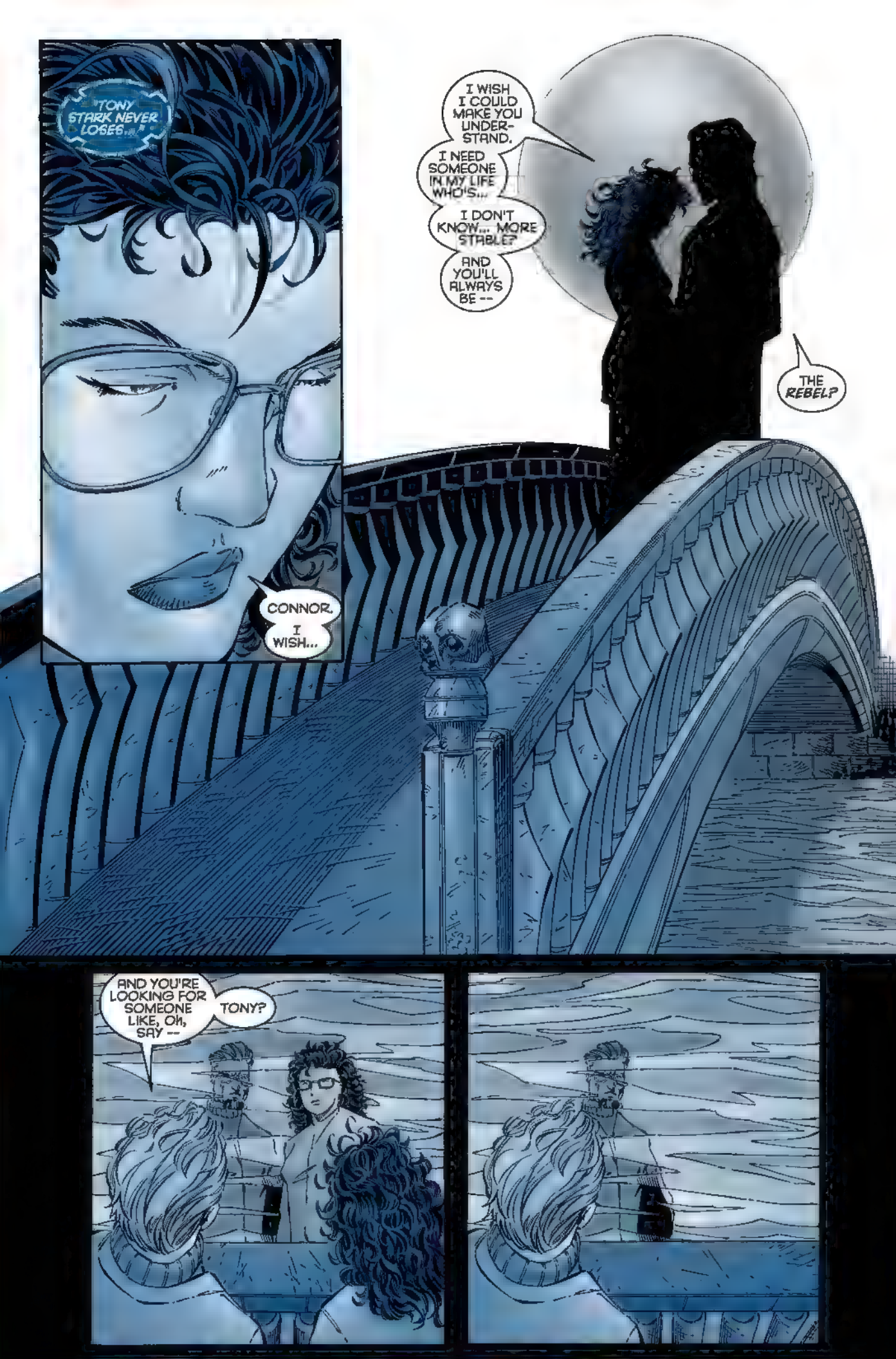
NOT LIKE WE USED TO
YOU CAN DO IT, CONNER!
HE HASN'T A PRAYER, PAM.
TONY STARK NEVER LOSES.
OVER 200 M.P.H.

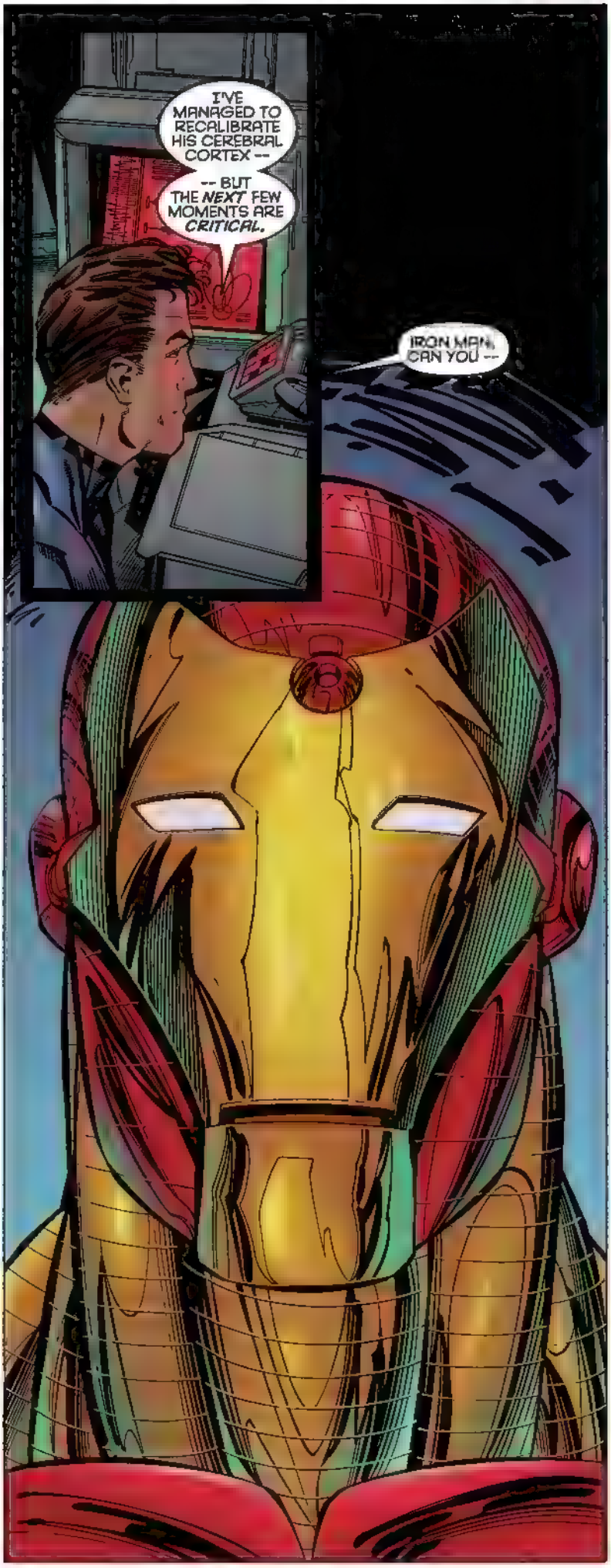
ZRAK
NOW, THAT WOULD'VE BEEN A GOOD DEATH.
SCREEK
CONNER!
OF ALL THE RECKLESS, CRAZY --
WANNA GO AGAIN, SPORT?
JUST
HAVIN' FUN

IRON MAN.
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
SO MUCH I DIDN'T KNOW.
WHEN... YOU SEE... ANOTHER MAN'S LIFE...
PERHAPS...
... WE SHOULD SEVER THE LINK. THE RISK TO YOUR OWN PSYCHE --
NO. HE'LL DIE.
WE GO ALL THE WAY, REED.
ALL THE WAY...

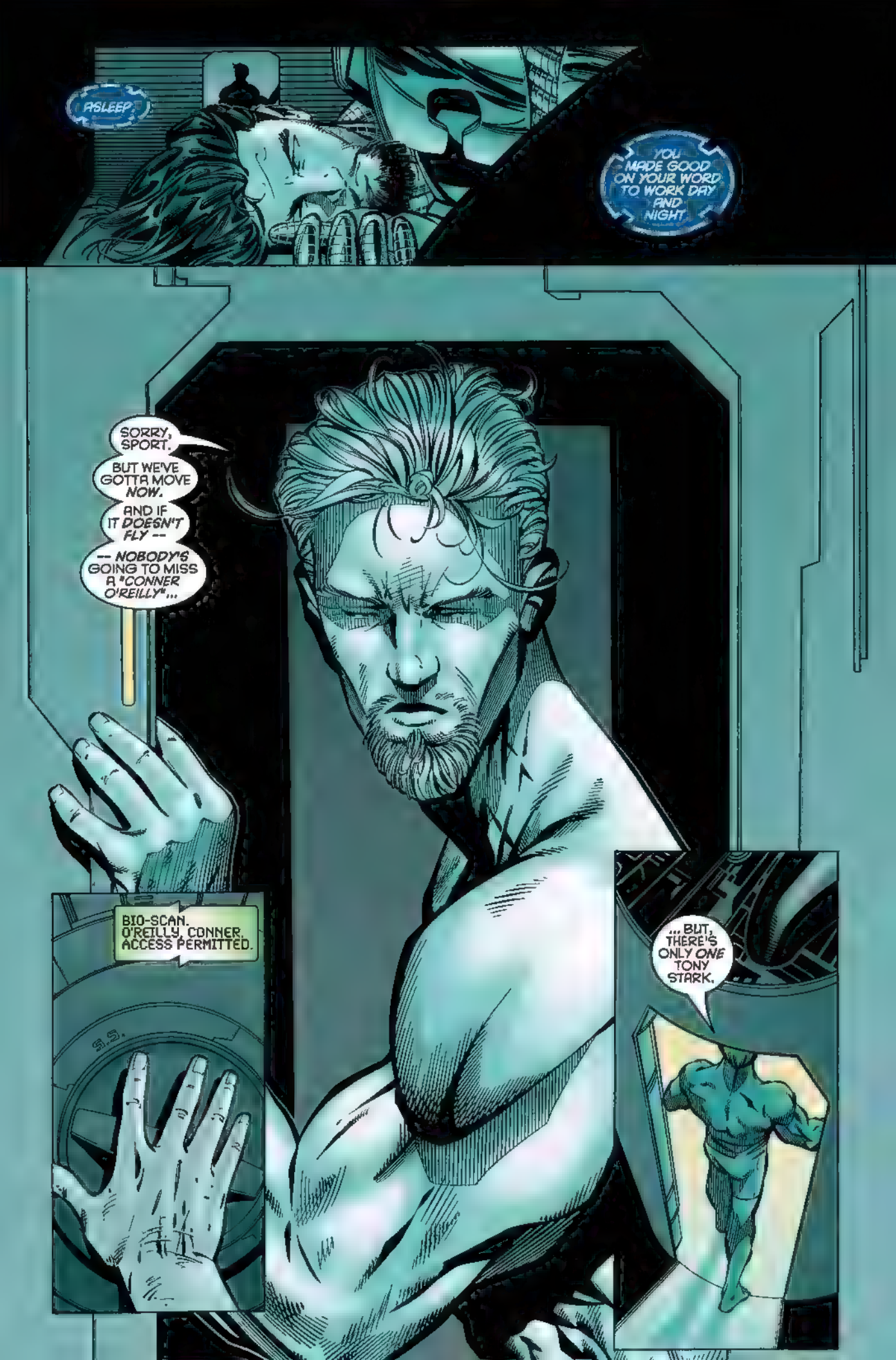

YOU KNOW WHEN IT ALL CHANGED, TONY?
THE DAY WE FINISHED THE PROTOTYPE.
THE ARMOR.
THIS WILL REVOLUTIONIZE THE WAY MAN EXPLORES THE EARTH.
WAGES WAR.
THAT'S ALL?
YOU'RE UNBELIEVABLE.
THAT'S WHAT PAM SAYS.
SO, WHAT DO WE DO NOW? FLIP A COIN?
I MEAN, WHICH ONE OF US SLIPS THAT ON AND MAKES HISTORY?
NEITHER.
THE RUSSIANS HAVE ALREADY BEATEN YOU TO THE PUNCH.
HELLO, VICTOR.

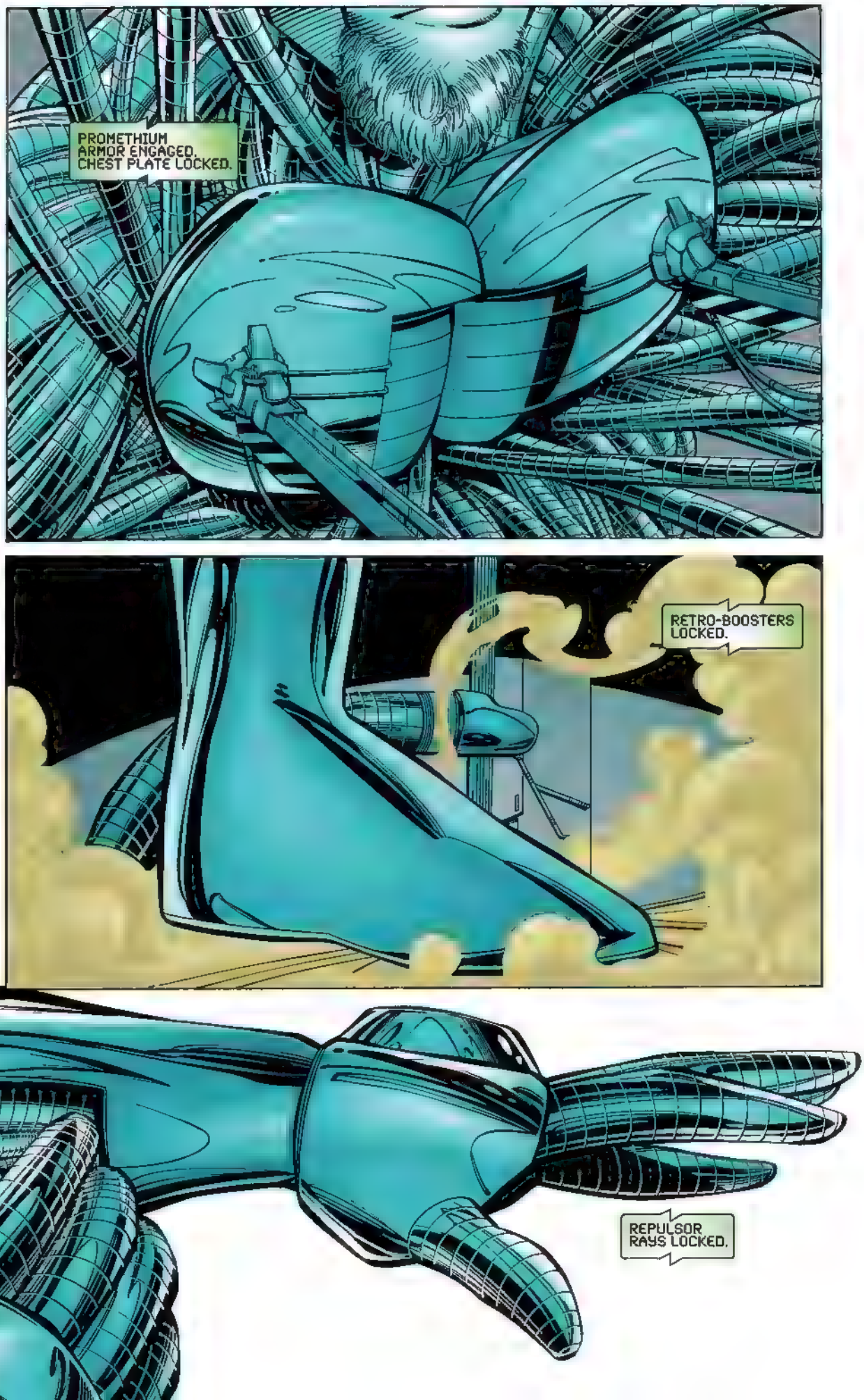
TITANIUM MAN?
(AP) MOSCOW
The Russian Military today announced the first of a series of streamlined suits of body armor Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim
IT'S SPUTNIK ALL OVER AGAIN.
WITH YOU AMERICANS RACING TO CATCH UP.
THAT'S JUST HYPE.
THE RUSSIANS COULD NEVER BUILD ANYTHING CLOSE TO THE SOPHISTICATION OF ---
YOU'RE RIGHT, STARK.
THEY COULD HAVE MADE IT BETTER.
YOU'LL SEE, VICTOR.
WE'LL WORK DAY AND NIGHT --
-- TONY STARK NEVER LOSES!


"TONY STARK NEVER LOSES..."
CONNOR. I WISH...
I WISH I COULD MAKE YOU UNDER-STAND.
I NEED SOMEONE IN MY LIFE WHO'S...
I DON'T KNOW... MORE STABLE?
AND YOU'LL ALWAYS BE --
THE REBEL?
AND YOU'RE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE LIKE, OH, SAY --
TONY?

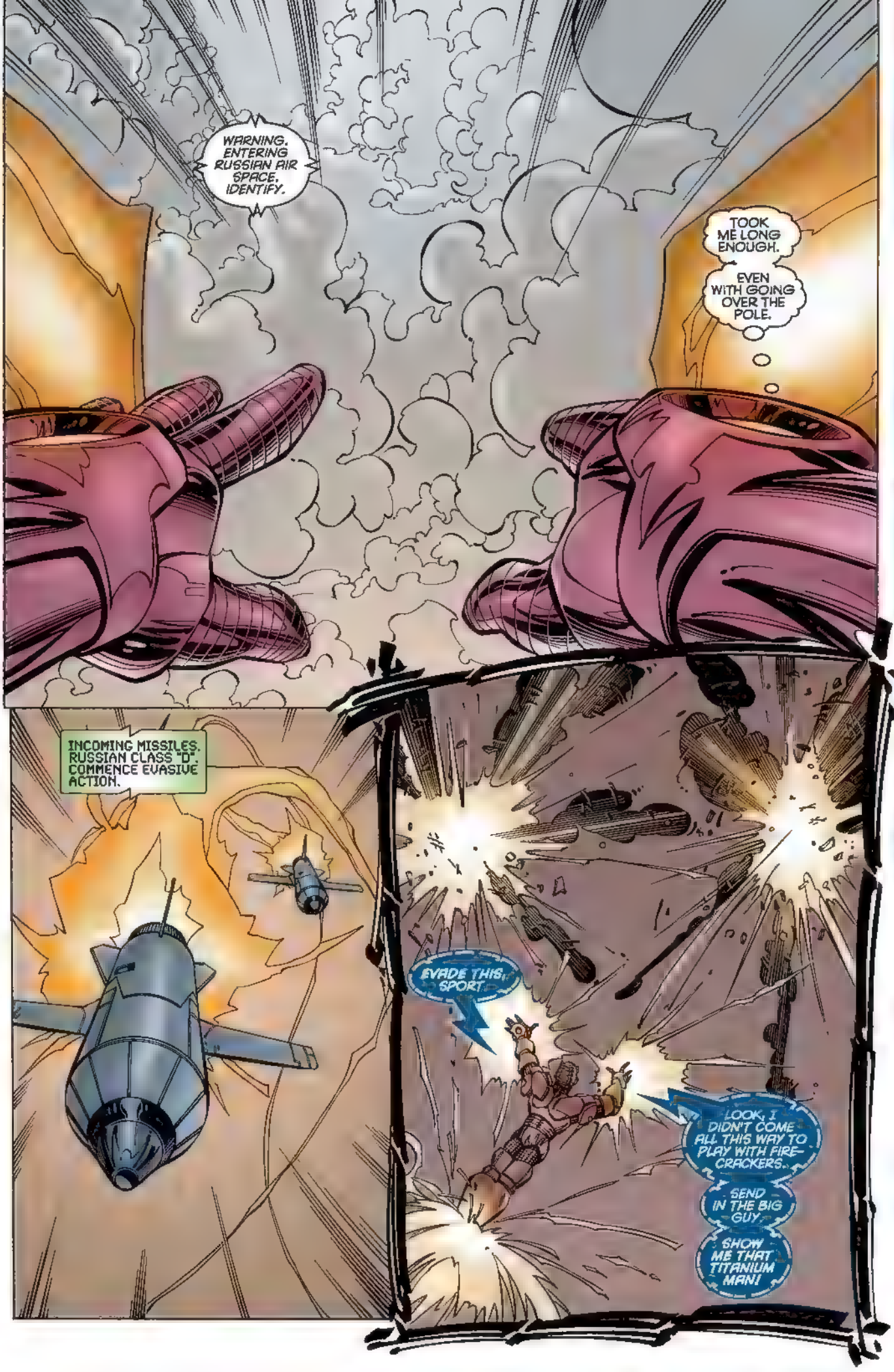

I'VE MANAGED TO RECALIBRATE HIS CEREBRAL CORTEX --
-- BUT THE *NEXT* FEW MOMENTS ARE *CRITICAL.*
IRON MAN, CAN YOU --

-- IRON MAN?!

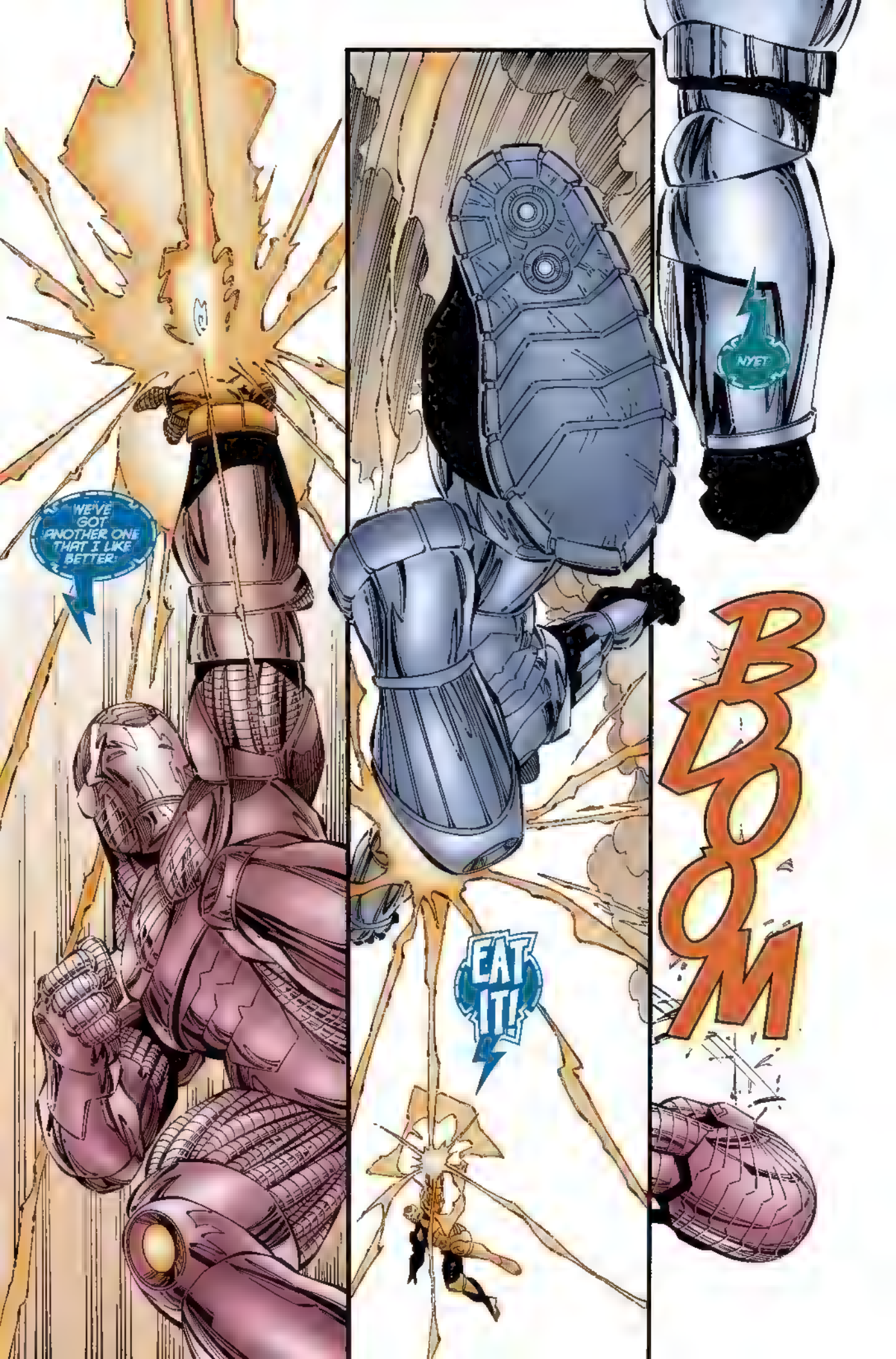

ASLEEP.
YOU MADE GOOD ON YOUR WORD TO WORK DAY AND NIGHT.
SORRY, SPORT.
BUT WE'VE GOTTA MOVE NOW.
AND IF IT DOESN'T FLY --
-- NOBODY'S GOING TO MISS A "CONNER O'REILLY"...
BIO-SCAN. O'REILLY, CONNER. ACCESS PERMITTED.
S.S.
... BUT, THERE'S ONLY ONE TONY STARK.


PROMETHIUM ARMOR ENGAGED. CHEST PLATE LOCKED.
RETRO-BOOSTERS LOCKED.
REPULSOR RAYS LOCKED.

I COULD FLY
I COULD FLY!


WARNING. ENTERING RUSSIAN AIR SPACE. IDENTIFY.
TOOK ME LONG ENOUGH.
EVEN WITH GOING OVER THE POLE.
INCOMING MISSILES. RUSSIAN CLASS "D". COMMENCE EVASIVE ACTION.
EVADE THIS, SPORT.
LOOK, I DIDN'T COME ALL THIS WAY TO PLAY WITH FIRE-CRACKERS.
SEND IN THE BIG GUY.
SHOW ME THAT TITANIUM MAN!

WHAM
WHAT IS IT THEY LIKE TO SAY IN YOUR COUNTRY AMERICAN?
BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR...
...YOU JUST MIGHT GET IT.
OUCH!


WE'VE GOT ANOTHER ONE THAT I LIKE BETTER.
NYET.
EAT IT!
BOOM

MALFUNCTION
-- SKREEK --
MALFUNCTION
I COULD KILL YOU RIGHT NOW
BUT, I THINK IT IS BETTER THAT YOUR AMERICAN INVESTORS SEE FOR THEMSELVES.
THE PRODUCT IS NOT READY AND SHOULD BE SHELVED
I'M SORRY TONY.
SORRY

LET'S TRY THIS AGAIN.
FROM THE TOP.
I GOT HOME. PUT THE ARMOR BACK. YOU NEVER KNEW.
AND WE TESTED IT LIKE IT WAS THE FIRST TIME...
T-TONY?!
*SEE ISSUE #1 -- Ruben-
I'M HERE, REB.
...FOR THE LAST TIME...
IS THIS SUIT GONNA COME OUT OF MY PAYCHE --?
BOOM
Mr. STARK?
SIR?
WE'RE SORRY, SIR.
WE'VE LOST HIM.

DIG HIM UP.
CONNER O'REILLY WILL LIVE AGAIN.
AT THE HANDS OF HYDRA, HE WILL —
PING
WARNING PSI-LINK SEVERED.
ENOUGH.
NO!

I ALMOST HAD IT, REED.
A FEW MORE SECONDS AND I WOULD HAVE SEEN WHO SET THIS UP!
A FEW SECONDS MORE AND I WOULD HAVE LOST BOTH OF YOU.
I HAD NO CHOICE.
YOU HAD NO RIGHT!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
REBEL WILL LIVE, BUT I CAN'T SAY FOR HOW LONG.
HOURS MINUTES..?
THEN GIVE ME A CHANCE...
...TO DIE LIKE A HERO...
NEXT: PAYBACK!

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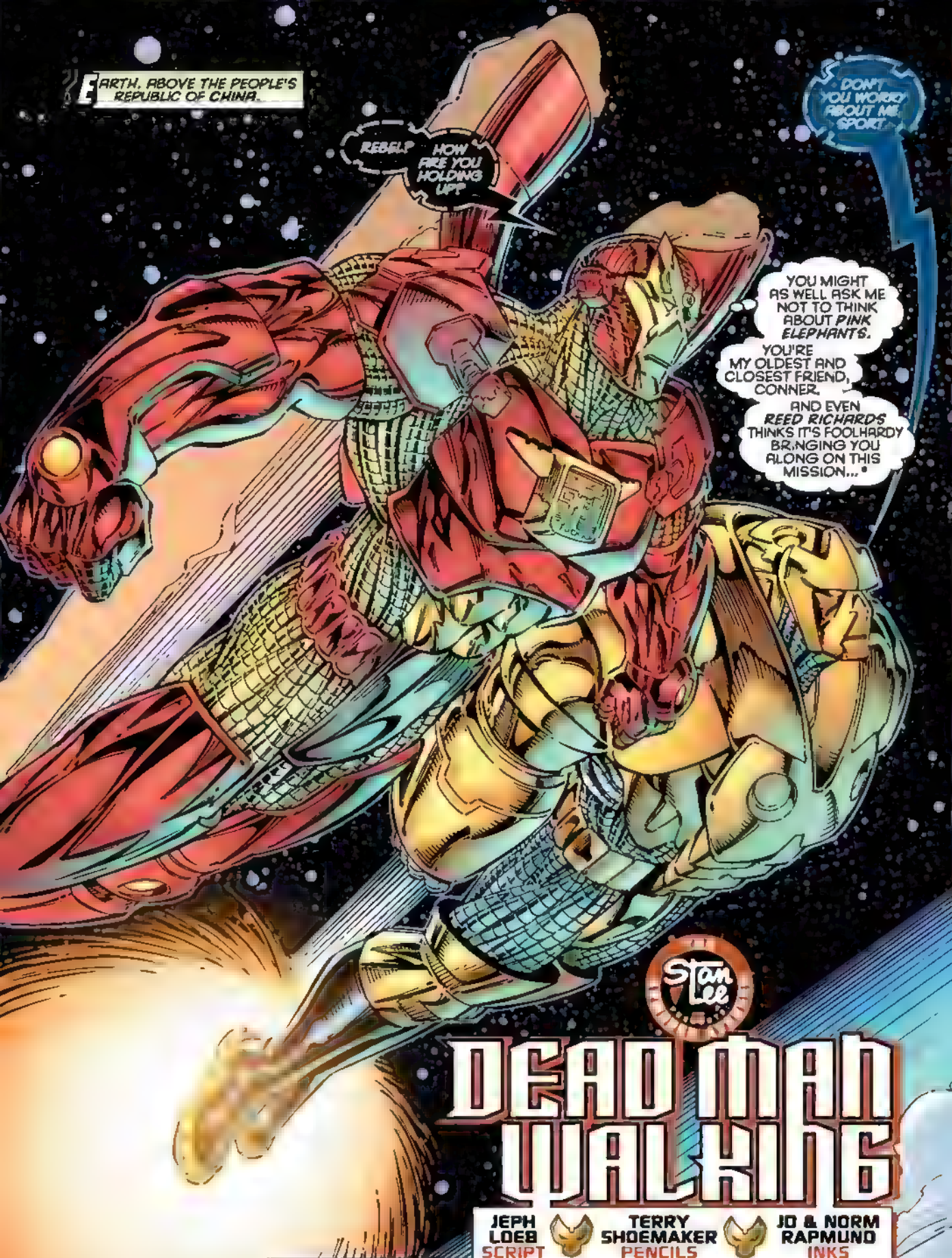
THE CALL.

SOMEWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE...
YOU KNOW WHO I SERVE.
NONE, SAVE MY MASTER, CAN STAY MY HAND.
WITH EACH LINK, YOU ONLY FORGE YOUR OWN DEATHS.
SILENCE!
FOR ONCE YOU MAY HAVE BEEN TERRAX THE TERRIBLE —
-- TERRAX THE CONQUEROR --
-- AND NOW, YOU ARE MERELY TERRAX, OUR CAPTIVE --
-- BOUND BY URU!
KRACK
HIS AXE! AS IF IT HAD A LIFE OF ITS OWN!
NOT OF ITS OWN.
WE BOTH SERVE THE SAME MASTER.
YOU COULD NO MORE STOP HIS HERALD --
-- THAN THE COMING OF THE VERY DAWN!
KAHOOM

IT MATTERS NOT HOW LONG I WAS KEPT BENEATH THIS PLANET'S SOIL.
OR HOW LONG I HAVE NOT BEEN BESIDE MY MASTER.
HE CALLS.
OUR PLANET IS DOOMED...
PERHAPS, SOMEDAY.
BUT, FOR NOW, ANOTHER PLANET HAS THAT HONOR...


EARTH. ABOVE THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.
REBEL? HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP?
DON'T YOU WORRY 'BOUT ME, SPORT.
YOU MIGHT AS WELL ASK ME NOT TO THINK ABOUT PINK ELEPHANTS.
YOU'RE MY OLDEST AND CLOSEST FRIEND, CONNER.
AND EVEN REED RICHARDS THINKS IT'S FOOLHARDY BRINGING YOU ALONG ON THIS MISSION...
Stan Lee

DEAD MAN WALKING

JEPH LOEB	TERRY SHOEMAKER	JO & NORM RAPMUND
SCRIPT	PENCILS	INKS

MARTIN JIMENEZ	WILDSTORM FX	RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT/AD	MICHELLE UPCHURCH	RUBEN DIAZ	BOB HARRAS
COLORS	COMPUTER COLORS	LETTERS	ASST EDITOR	EDITOR	CHIEF

*SEE LAST ISSUE FOR--Oldest, Closest, Robert

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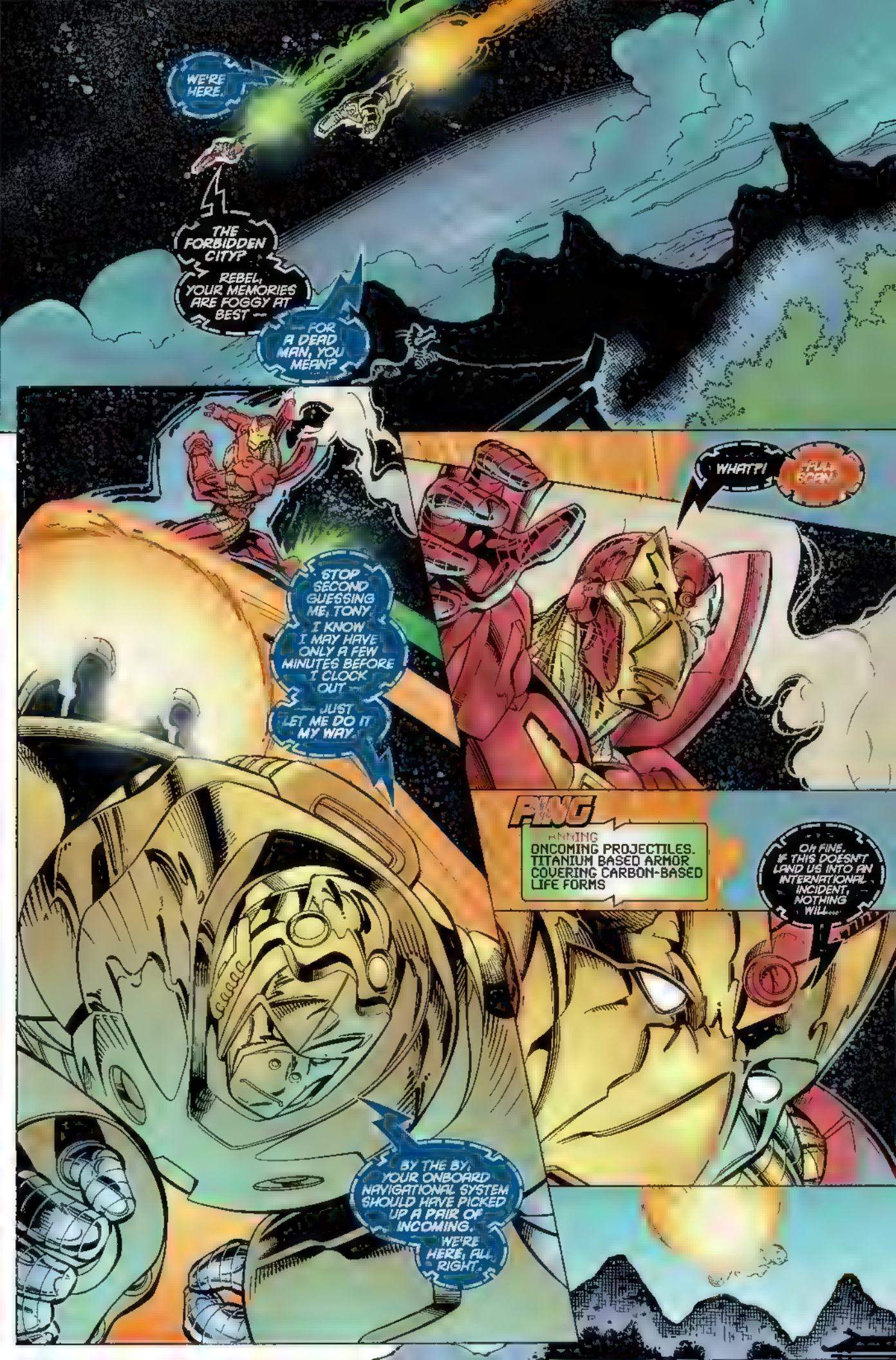

WE'RE HERE.
THE FORBIDDEN CITY?
REBEL, YOUR MEMORIES ARE FOGGY AT BEST --
-- FOR A DEAD MAN, YOU MEAN?
STOP SECOND GUESSING ME, TONY. I KNOW I MAY HAVE ONLY A FEW MINUTES BEFORE I CLOCK OUT --
-- JUST LET ME DO IT MY WAY.
WHAT?!
I'LL SCAN!
PING
SCANNING ONCOMING PROJECTILES. TITANIUM BASED ARMOR COVERING CARBON-BASED LIFE FORMS
OH FINE. IF THIS DOESN'T LAND US INTO AN INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT, NOTHING WILL...
BY THE BY, YOUR ONBOARD NAVIGATIONAL SYSTEM SHOULD HAVE PICKED UP A PAIR OF INCOMING.
WE'RE HERE, ALL RIGHT.

SUBJECTS IDENTIFIED AS RUSSIAN NATIONALISTS TITANIUM MAN AND CRIMSON DYNAMO.
BDOOM
A LITTLE FAR FROM HOME, AREN'T YOU, MISTER T.?
NOT THAT GETTING ANOTHER SHOT AT ROCKING YOUR WORLD DOESN'T MAKE MY LIFE WORTH LIVING.
WITH THE FALL OF THE U.S.S.R. WE HAVE FOUND A NEW ALLEGIANCE
ONE WHICH YOU WILL DISCOVER IS FAR MORE DEADLY THAN ANY AMERICAN CAN IMAGINE
RATCH

ZZZRAK
I BRING YOU A TWO MILLION KILOWATT WELCOME
WE WERE TOLD TO EXPECT YOU
COMPENSATE
RECALIBRATE
THOOM
RECIPROCATE
ARGH!
AND YOU TWO AREN'T EVEN ON THE ITINERARY.
EH?
AS MUCH AS I'D LIKE TO STAY FOR A BOWL OF BORCHT—
— WE'VE GOT PLACES TO GO AND PEOPLE TO SEE.
CLANG

REBEL, BREAK IT OFF.
NO CAN DO, TON. I CAN TAKE HIM --
WHAM
ROKK
POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
EACH DISC GENERATES A MAGNETIC FIELD.
BY CHANGING THEIR POLARITY --

I TOLD YOU I COULD TAKE HIM! WHY DID YOU BUTT IN?
WELL... YOU GET THE PICTURE.
MFI I-SCAN
SUBJECT: REBEL.
BLOOD PRESSURE RISING.
HEART BEAT ABNORMAL.
ALL THE TIME I'VE KNOWN YOU, YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO KILL YOURSELF --
TO PROVE TO ME THAT YOU'VE GOT THE MAKINGS OF A HERO.
YOU CAN STOP. I BELIEVE IN YOU.
I ALWAYS HAVE, REBEL.
...ALL RIGHT...

YOU'RE THE MAN WITH THE PLAN.
COME.
NOTHING WOULD GIVE ME GREATER --
BLIP
CLOAKED!
READY YOURSELVES.
HAIL HYDRA!
OUR MOMENT IS AT HAND --
YES, IT IS, MY CHILD.
-- THE HAND OF HYDRA.
WHICH IS THE HAND OF THE MANDARIN.
WHICH IS MY HAND.

YOU WANT TO DO WHAT?!
HALF A WORLD AWAY.
THE OFFICES OF DOCTOR LEONARD SAMPSON.
YOU HEARD ME, JENNIFER.
WE NEED A CONTAINMENT VESSEL FOR THE MASSIVE GAMMA RADIATION THAT YOUR COUSIN TOOK ON IN THE AVENGERS' GAMMA CORE.*
LEONARD, WHEN BRUCE AND I SOUGHT YOU OUT, WE HAD NO IDEA THAT --
-- THAT WHAT?
*SEE IRON MAN #6 -- Over-radiated Rubeo.
-- THAT DOC SAMPSON HAD BEEN TURNED INTO THIS ABOMINATION?
-- THAT JASPER SITWELL, TONY STARK'S TRUSTED GOVERNMENT LIAISON, DELIBERATELY INFECTED ME WITH A GAMMA VIRUS?
-- THAT IF WE DON'T ACT SOON, BOTH BRUCE BANNER AND I WILL BE DEAD?
Um... THAT JUST ABOUT SUMS IT UP. LOOK, MAYBE WE NEED TO BRING REED RICHARDS IN ON THIS --
NO!

MY MISTAKES HAVE ENDANGERED ENOUGH LIVES.
LEONARD IS RIGHT. IF WE EACH TAKE A BLOOD TRANSFUSION FROM THE OTHER --
-- OUR RADIATED DNA CELLS MIGHT BRING THIS NIGHTMARE TO AN END.
OR IT JUST MIGHT KILL YOU BOTH, BRUCE.
I'M WILLING TO TAKE THAT CHANCE.
AND SO AM I.
LEONARD, I'M SORRY --
-- DON'T BE. I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT SOMEHOW I KNOW THIS IS WHAT'S SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN.
... PLEASE... NOT NOW...
... NOT... LOSE... CONTROL.
SNAP

GREEN MAN TRIES TO STOP HULK.
BUT, HULK IS HERE!
BRUCE, NO, WE'RE TRYING TO HELP --
IT'S WHAT YOU WANTED, HULK, REMEMBER?
IT'S WHY YOU CAME TO SEE ME.*
HULK KNOWS YOU.
HULK IS... CONFUSED.
*SEE IRON MAN #8 -- Confused Ruben+
THEN, GET OUT OF THE WAY.
YOU'RE NOT MAKING THIS ANY EASIER.
JEN... WHAT... ARE YOU DOING?!
WHAT IS IT YOU SAID, LEONARD?
"I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT SOMEHOW I KNOW THIS IS WHAT'S SUPPOSED TO --"
NNNGN!

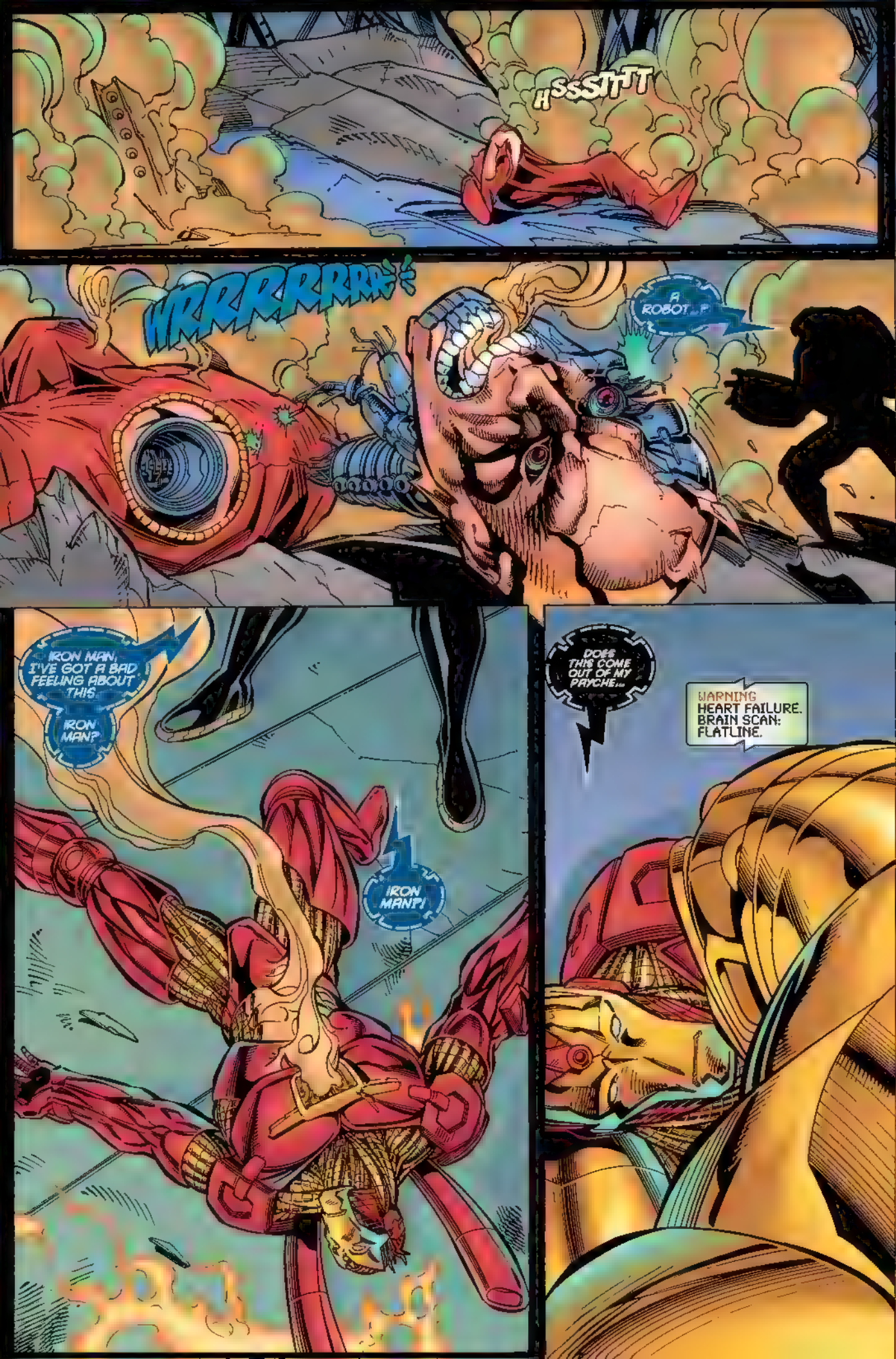
SUDDENLY...
... BENEATH THE FORBIDDEN CITY.
THE TERRORIST ORGANIZATION KNOWN ONLY AS HYDRA HOLDS ITS BREATH --
-- WAITING FOR THE CONFRONTATION IT WAS IN SOME WAYS...
RRUMBBLE
... CREATED FOR...
READY TO CUT LOOSE?
JUST FOLLOW MY LEAD.

SHIELDS
I'LL BE... RIGHT BACK.
REBEL! WHAT HAPPENED TO "THE MAN WITH THE PLAN"?
TOOM
BUP
TOOM
ALL SENSORS GO TO "SWEEP". FIND THAT REBEL —
BUP
I'M RIGHT HERE.
CALL OFF YOUR MEN.
NOW!

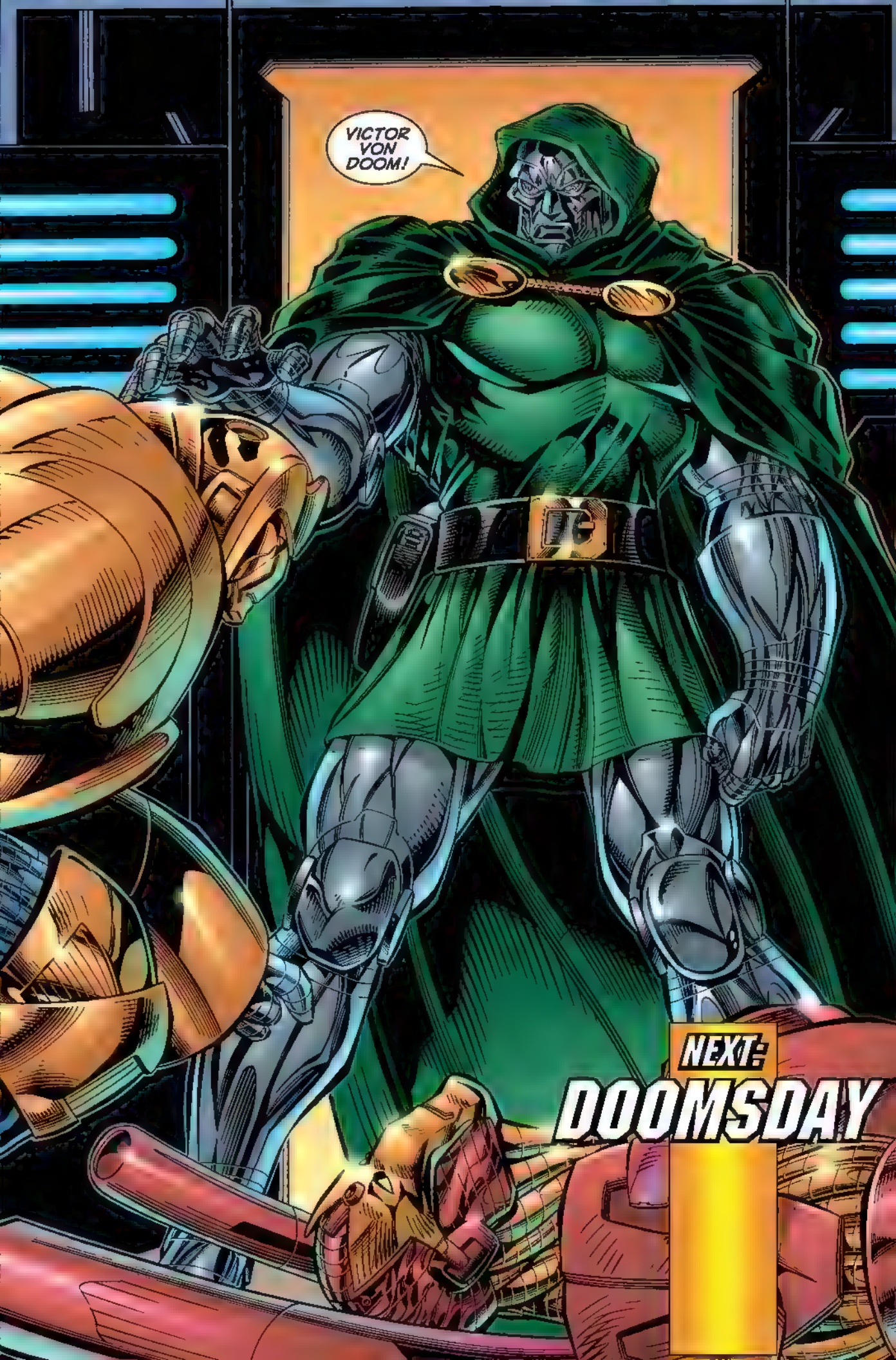
HE'S NOT BLUFFING, LADY. WE DON'T CALL HIM "REBEL" FOR NOTHING.
STRIKE ME DOWN, THEN, IF YOU DARE. AND YOU WILL LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO CUT OFF ONE LIMB —
I WARNED YOU, MY CHILD, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU INTERFERED WITH TONY STARK AGAIN.
-- AND HAVE ANOTHER TAKE ITS PLACE.
HE... HE KILLED HER...!

A LESSON YOU WILL BOTH BE TAUGHT --
-- BY THE TEN RINGS OF THE MANDARIN!
MISTER, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU FIT INTO ALL THIS --
-- BUT IF YOU WANT TO SEE POWER COME OUT OF SOMEBODY'S MITTS --
-- YOU CAME TO THE RIGHT ADDRESS, SPORT.
REBEL, GET OUT OF HERE, WHILE YOU CAN.
IT'S OVER FOR HYDRA.

AAAH!
YOU'VE GOT TO BREAK IT OFF!
YOU'RE EXPENDING TOO MUCH ENERGY!
GO!
WHAROOM!


HSSSITTT
WRRRRRRRR
A ROBOT...?
IRON MAN, I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.
IRON MAN?
IRON MAN?!
DOES THIS COME OUT OF MY PSYCHE...
WARNING
HEART FAILURE.
BRAIN SCAN:
FLATLINE.

THE CURTAIN FALLS.
IRON MAN IS *DEAD.*
AND *STARK INTERNATIONAL* IS NOW *RIPE* FOR THE PICKING.
THAT... VOICE...
OF COURSE, IT WAS *ME.*
WHO *ELSE* COULD HAVE CREATED SUCH AN ELABORATE ORGANIZATION AS *HYDRA* TO KEEP THE WORLD FROM NOTICING *MY HANDIWORK?*
WHO *ELSE* COULD HAVE MASTERED THE ROBOTICS NECESSARY TO CREATE A *"MANDARIN"* SO REAL THAT MADAM HYDRA WOULD NOT SUSPECT *HER TRUE RULER?*
WHO *ELSE* COULD HAVE RETURNED YOU TO LIFE, CONNOR O'REILLY, JUST TO HAVE YOU *BETRAY* TONY STARK?
WHO ELSE, OTHER THAN —


VICTOR VON DOOM!
NEXT:
DOOMSDAY

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THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
SEPT #11
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LOEB
PORTACIO
JD
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LATVERIA
THE HOME OF THE DESPOT KNOWN AS VICTOR VON DOOM --
DOCTOR DOOM!
... A BRAIN... ... THE COURAGE. AH, TIN MEN.
THE Stan Lee UNIVERSE
MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR
LEE & LOEB
PLOT
JEPH LOEB
SCRIPT
WHILCE PORTACIO & TERRY SHOEMAKER
PENCILS
JD & HOMAGE STUDIOS
INKS
MARTIN JIMENEZ
COLORS
WILDSTORM FX COMPUTER COLORS
RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT'S ALBERT DESCHESNE
LETTERS
MICHELLE UPCHURCH
ASST EDITOR
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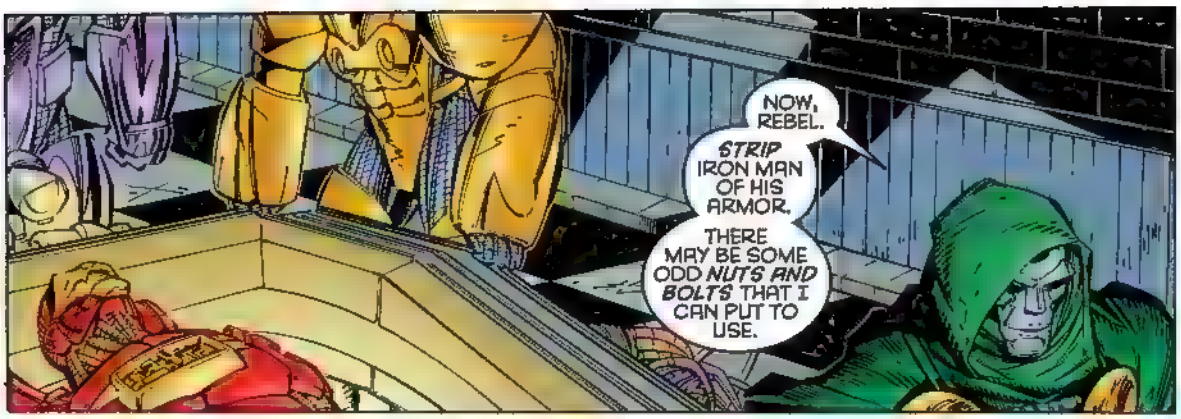
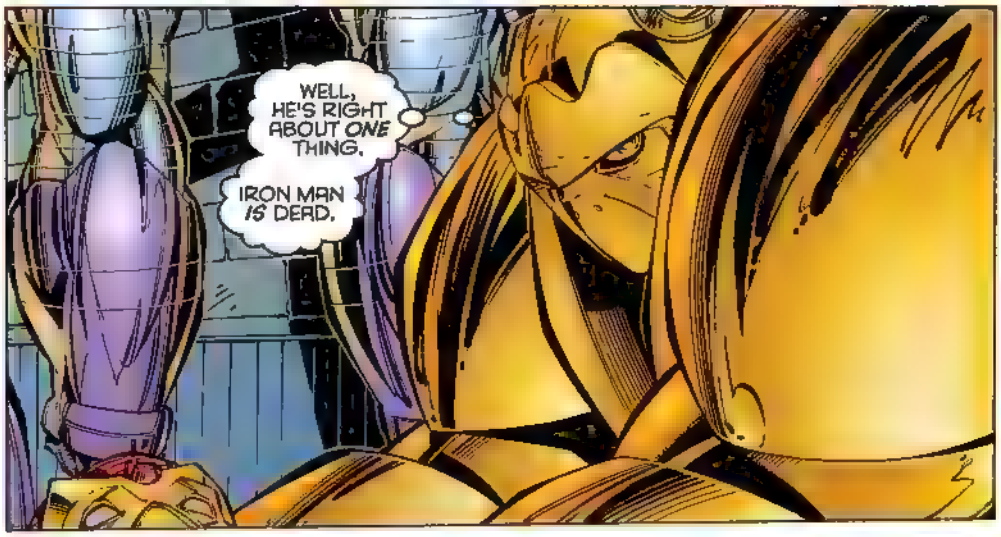
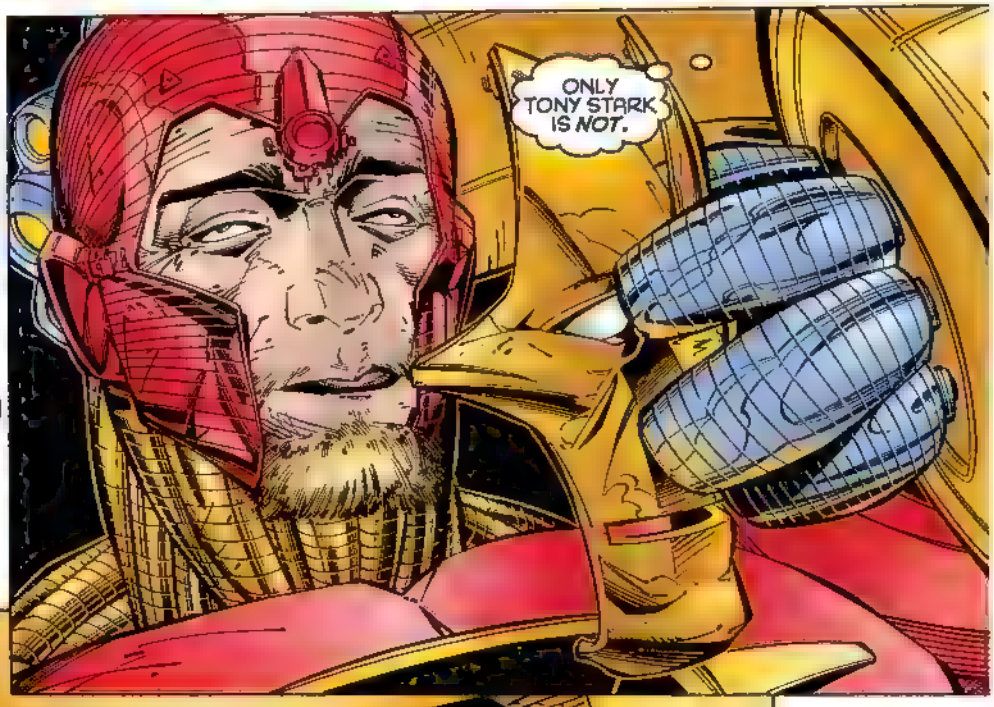
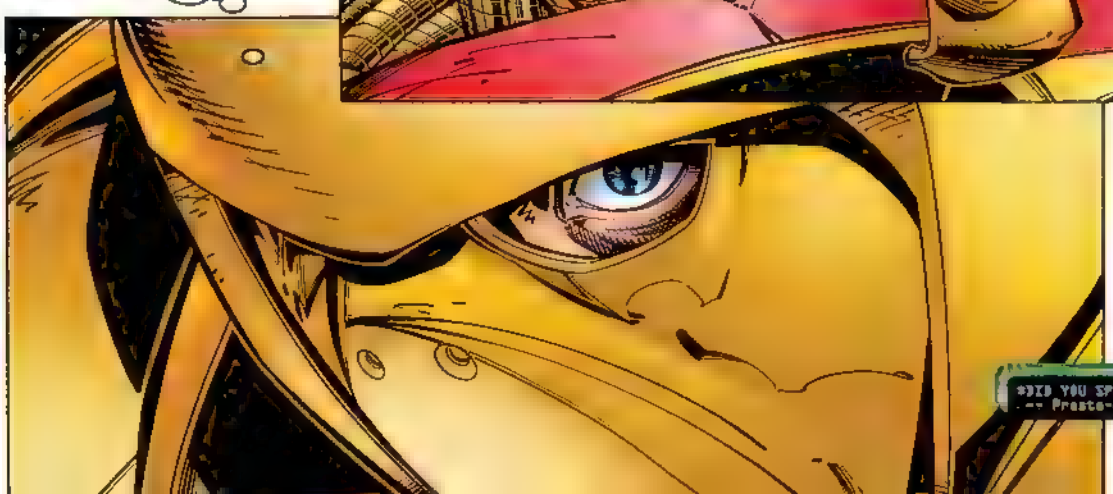
WAITING TO TAKE YOU AWAY
HOW IS IT, REBE... THAT AFTER YEARS OF ENDURING STARK'S ENDLESS PRATTLING IN COLLEGE --
-- MEANINGLESS HOURS SPENT IN THE COMPANY OF THE SO-CALLED "KNIGHTS OF THE ATOMIC ROUND TABLE" --
-- THAT IT WOULD BE DOOM AND DOOM ALONE WHO WOULD BE LEFT STANDING WHEN ALL WAS SAID AND DONE?!
CHILD'S PLAY FOR SOMEONE WHO HOLDS YOUR NEW ARMOR IN A TECHNO-PSIONIC GRIP.
REDESIGNED BY THE SAME MAN WHO GAVE THE RUSSIANS THE R TITANIUM MAN YEARS AGO.
LET OTHERS BOAST.
DOOM ACTS!


NOW, REBEL.
STRIP IRON MAN OF HIS ARMOR.
THERE MAY BE SOME ODD NUTS AND BOLTS THAT I CAN PUT TO USE.

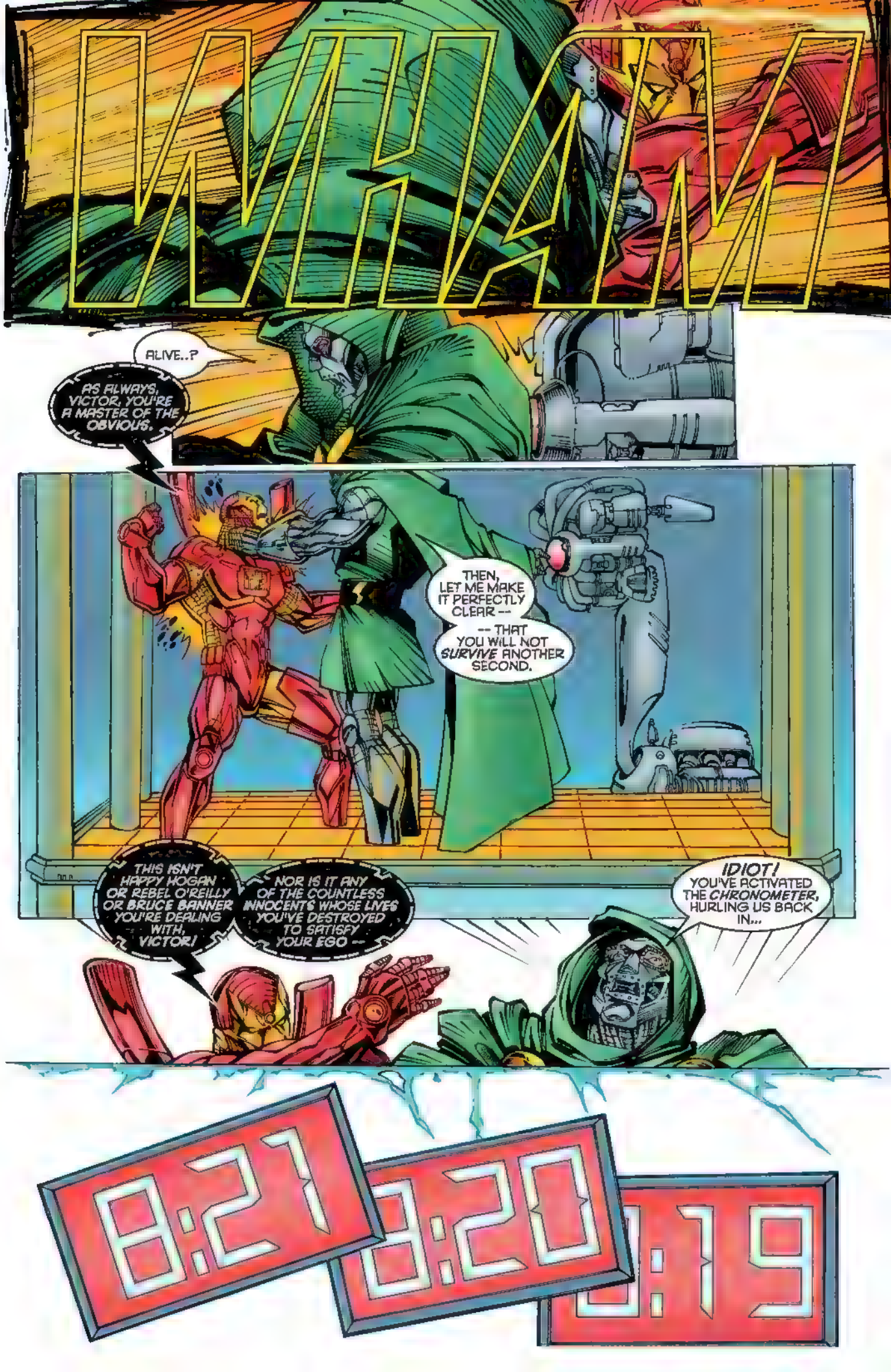

WELL, HE'S RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING.
IRON MAN IS DEAD.


ONLY TONY STARK IS NOT.


REBEL, BEFORE WE SWITCHED ARMOR. YOU TOLD ME YOU WANTED TO DIE LIKE A HERO.*
NOW, IT'S MY TURN TO MAKE SURE YOUR SACRIFICE WASN'T MADE IN VAIN.
*DID YOU SPOT IT LAST ISH? -- Presto-change Ruben-

YES, VICTOR, LET OTHERS BOAST...
BUT, TO HAVE FINALLY ACHIEVED TOTAL HUMILIATION OVER TONY STARK...
...ONLY TO REALIZE THAT *THIS PLANET* ITSELF MAY *NO LONGER EXIST.*
FOR WHAT GOOD IS IT TO BE A KING...
...IF THERE IS NO KINGDOM?
KRASH
WHO DARES?!

I DARE.


KRAM!
ALIVE..?
AS ALWAYS, VICTOR, YOU'RE A MASTER OF THE OBVIOUS.
THEN, LET ME MAKE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR --
-- THAT YOU WILL NOT SURVIVE ANOTHER SECOND.
THIS ISN'T HAPPY HOGAN OR REBEL O'REILLY OR BRUCE BANNER YOU'RE DEALING WITH, VICTOR!
NOR IS IT ANY OF THE COUNTLESS INNOCENTS WHOSE LIVES YOU'VE DESTROYED TO SATISFY YOUR EGO --
IDIOT! YOU'VE ACTIVATED THE CHRONOMETER, HURLING US BACK IN...
8:21
8:20
8:19

TIME JOLT. NEW YORK CITY. ONE YEAR AGO.
BEHOLD MY MIGHTY HAND!
... TIME.
DOOM! WHAT KIND OF TRICK ARE YOU PULLING NOW?
THIS IS NO TRICK.
BUT... A VISION OF WHAT HAS BEEN...
... OR WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN?
#500 ONSLAUGHT: MARVEL UNIVERSE
Back Ish Blaz

TIME JOLT. ARIZONA. YEARS AGO.
GOT YOU!
STAY THY HAND, GREEN GOLIATH.
HULK, LISTEN TO US! THAT... ARMORED MAN JUST POPPED IN OUT OF THIN AIR --
-- HE COULD BE A FRIEND OR ANOTHER OF LOKI'S TRICKS!*
BAH! HULK WILL CRUSH SARDINE CAN --
-- THEN ASK STUPID QUESTIONS!
*SEE AVENGERS Vol #1, #3 -- Bookworm Diaz-
Hmmm...
CAN'T HAVE THAT.
LIKE IT OR NOT, HE'S MY TICKET HO FROM THIS LITTLE --
-- "MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR."
THOOM
ARRGH!

COMPUTER! GIVE ME ANYTHING!
PING
SUBJECT: STARK, ANTHONY. BIOLOGICAL AND PSIONIC MAKEUP. CROSS-REFERENCING...
WHRRRRR
IDENTICAL TO YOU.
WHAT?!
WHO -- WHAT ARE YOU?
I'M... A FRIEND...
...WHO COULD GIVE YOU SOME TIPS ON DESIGN.
WHY... WHY ARE YOU HERE..?
WHY... INDEED..?

PING
WARNING
MAIN ENERGY SUPPLY DEPLETED. CONVERTING TO RESERVE. RECOMMEND ENERGIZING.
EASIER SAID THAN DONE.
TIME JOLT. THE OCEAN. HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO.*
*WAY BACK IN FF Vol #1, #5 AS A FATTER OF FACT -- Duban Riaz.

GOT YA.

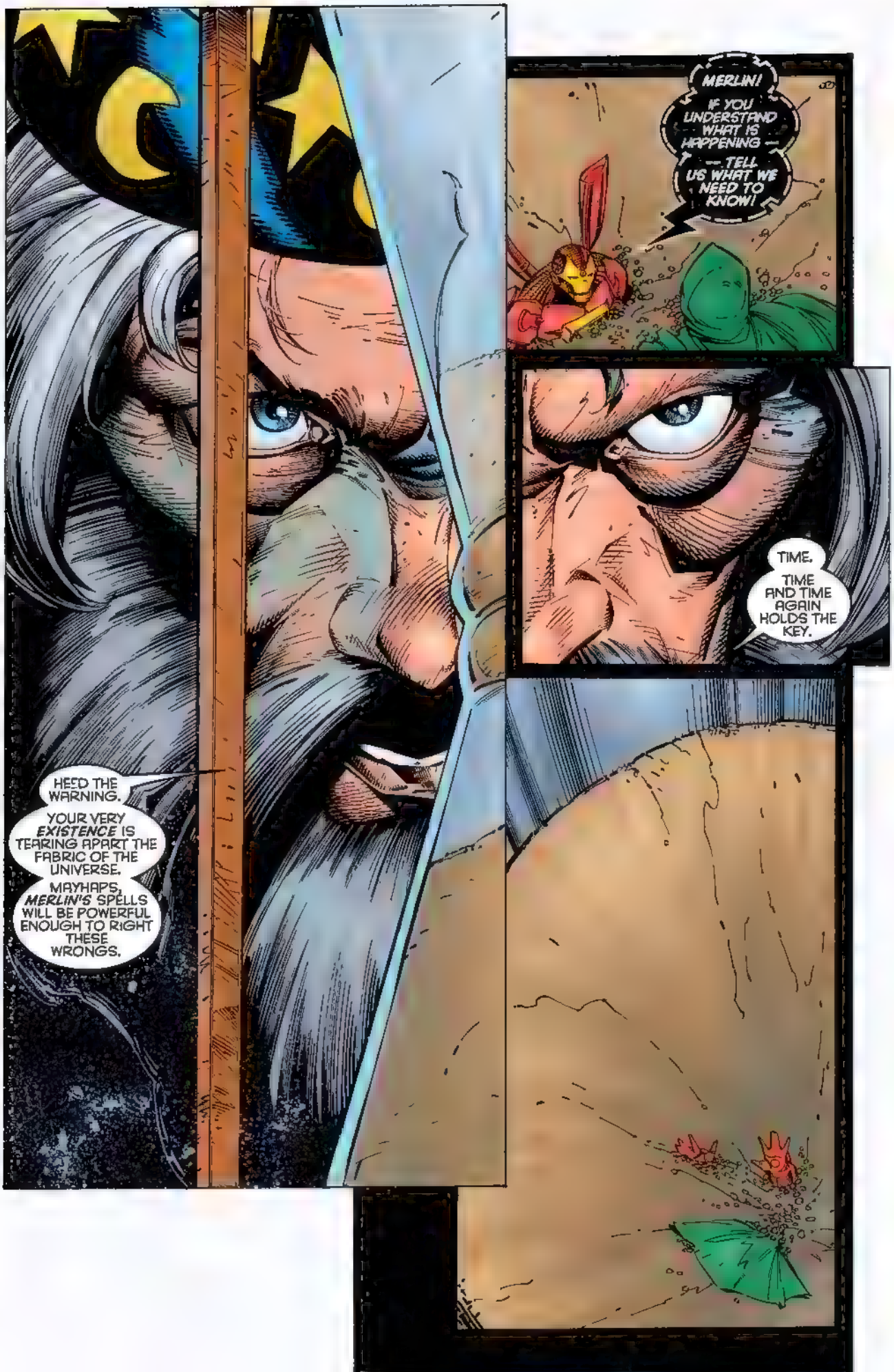
I DON'T KNOW HOW YA GOT 'BOARD MY SHIP, BUT --
BEN? BEN, IS THAT YOU?
HUH?! YA KNOW ME?

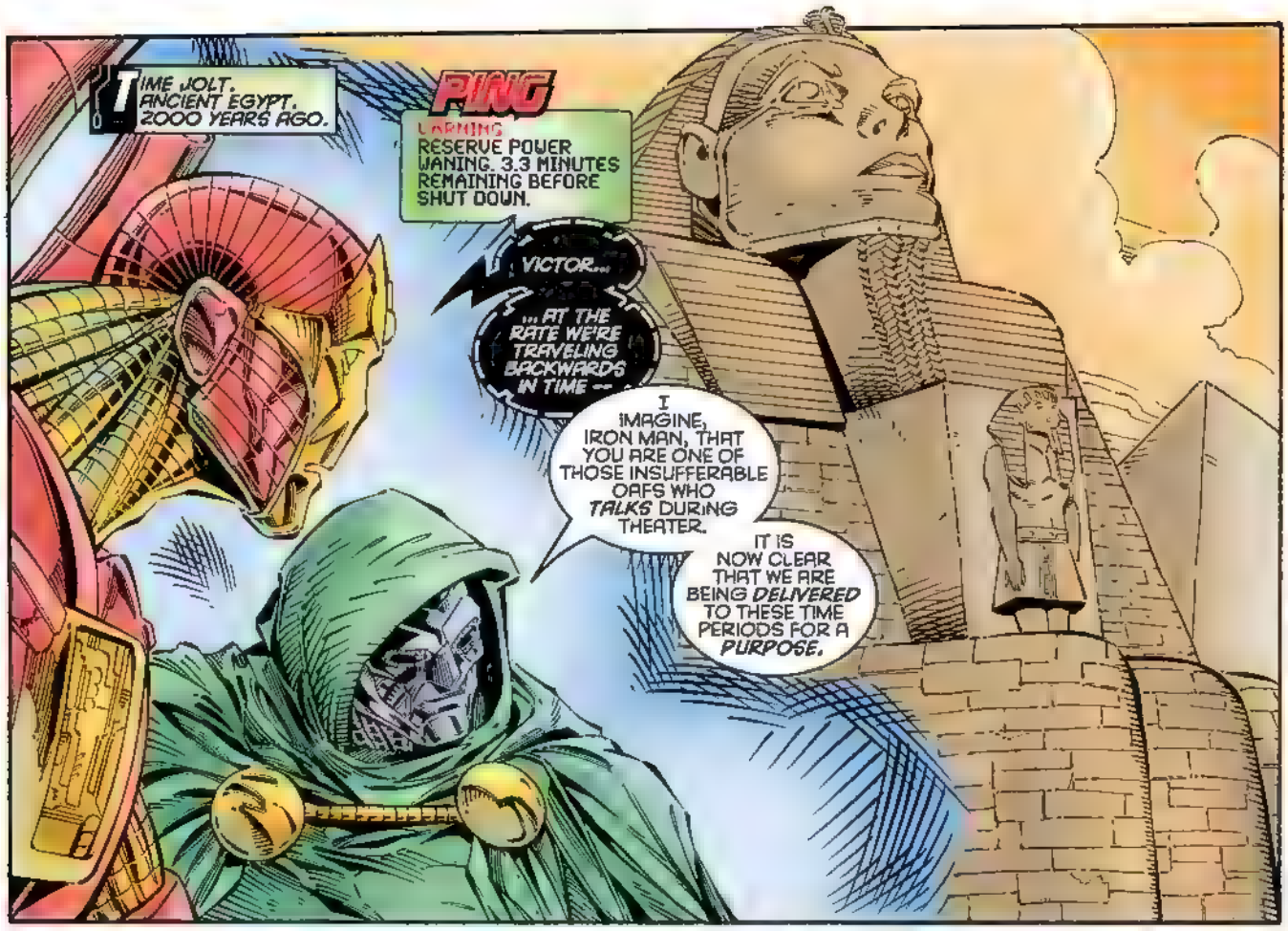
THE THING -- HERE -- DRESSED AS BLUEBEARD OF ALL... THINGS.
THEN, THE DIMWITTED REED RICHARDS CANNOT BE FAR.
BRZARK

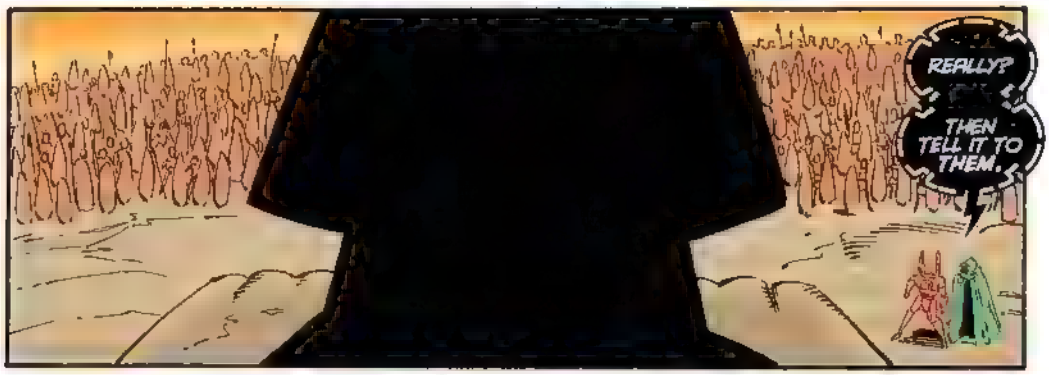
DOOM!
SO, YA GOT TRAPPED BACK HERE WITH ME, HUH?
GOOD, YA'LL MAKE A SWELL ANCHOR.
I KNOW NOT OF WHERE OR WHEN YOU SPEAK, GRIMM.
BUT AS I'VE WARNED YOU BEFORE,
NONE MAY TOUCH VICTOR VON DOOM!
SEZ YOU.

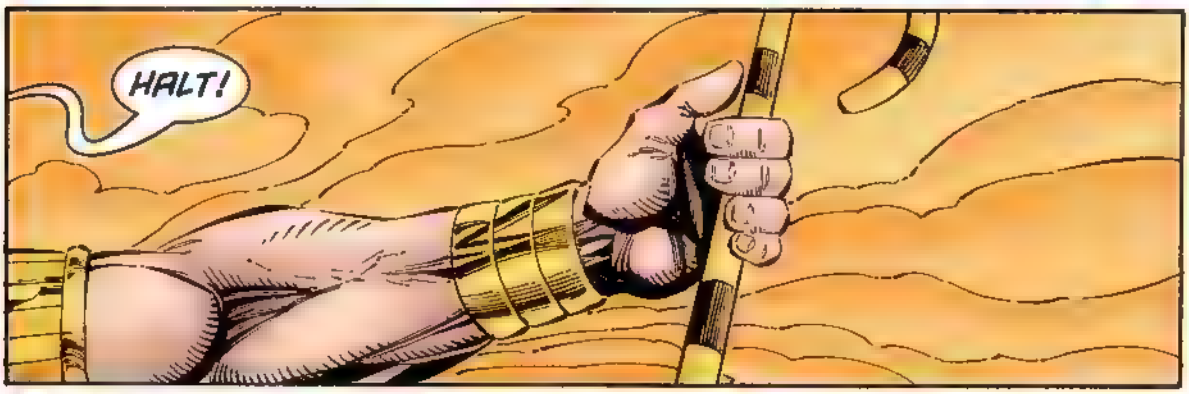
TIME JOLT. CAMELOT. 1000 YEARS AGO.
VICTOR —
— EVEN YOU HAVE TO CONCEDE THAT ONLY WORKING TOGETHER, CAN WE —
I CONCEDE NOTHING, EXCEPT THAT THESE... VISIONS ARE MINE AND MINE ALONE TO —
— COMPREHEND.

THE MEN OF IRON.
HERE AGAIN.*
FOR THE FIRST TIME.
THEY WERE THERE IN IRON MAN Vol 01, #150 -- Sir Ruben of Diaz.


MERLIN!
IF YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IS HAPPENING —
— TELL US WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW!
TIME.
TIME AND TIME AGAIN HOLDS THE KEY.
HEED THE WARNING.
YOUR VERY *EXISTENCE* IS TEARING APART THE FABRIC OF THE UNIVERSE.
MAYHAPS, *MERLIN'S* SPELLS WILL BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO RIGHT THESE WRONGS.


TIME JOLT. ANCIENT EGYPT. 2000 YEARS AGO.
PING
WARNING
RESERVE POWER WANING. 3.3 MINUTES REMAINING BEFORE SHUT DOWN.
VICTOR...
...AT THE RATE WE'RE TRAVELING BACKWARDS IN TIME --
I IMAGINE, IRON MAN, THAT YOU ARE ONE OF THOSE INSUFFERABLE OAFS WHO TALKS DURING THEATER.
IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT WE ARE BEING DELIVERED TO THESE TIME PERIODS FOR A PURPOSE.


REALLY?
THEN TELL IT TO THEM.


HALT!

YES, OH MIGHTY PHARAOH.

VISITORS.
YOU, TOO, MUST BOW BEFORE YOUR PHARAOH.
SO SPEAKS RAMA TUT.*
VICTOR VON DOOM BOWS BEFORE NO MAN.
THE ARROGANCE OF YOUTH.
CAN YOU NOT SEE WHAT IS TO COME, YOUNG VICTOR?
WHAT WAS AND WILL ALWAYS BE?
WHAT WAS... AND WILL ALWAYS BE...
"YOUNG VICTOR?!"
DOOM, DO YOU KNOW THIS —
SEE FF VOL #1, #17 -- Highly Collectable Diaz.

TIME JOLT. ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.
PING
WARNING
SIXTY SECONDS REMAIN BEFORE OFF-LINE. CARDIAC ARREST IN 73.4 SECONDS.
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
STARK. WATCH. LEARN.
NO... NOT NOW... NOT WHEN ALL THE ANSWERS TO THE ORIGINS OF THIS PLANET WERE TO BE LAID BEFORE...

LATVERIA. NOW.
... ME.
MASTER, YOU HAVE RETURNED.
SHOULD WE DISPOSE OF THE ONE CALLED IRON MAN?
TRY IT.
PING
WARNING TEN SECONDS REMAINING ON INTERNAL POWER SUPPLY.
STAY YOUR WEAPONS.
YOU CAN GO, TONY STARK.
AND TAKE THE BODY OF REBEL O'REILLY.
FOR EVEN DOOM KNOWS WHEN THE TIME FOR FIGHTING HAS ENDED --

"-- AND THE TIME FOR REFLECTING MUST FOLLOW."
AND JUST LIKE THAT, REED, IT WAS OVER.
AS IF, WHATEVER DOOM SAW IN THE PAST WOULD FOREVER CHANGE OUR FUTURE.
FASCINATING.
RECENTLY, THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAD A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE
SPINNING ALTERNATE REALITIES THAT SOMEHOW TIE THEIR VERY EXISTENCE TO THIS PLANET."
CONNER O'REILLY "REBEL TO THE END"
SEE F.F. VOL #2, #7-- Whew! I'm done.
A RIFT IN THE TIME CONTINUUM...
... IT WOULD ANSWER SO MANY QUESTIONS...

... THEN, THE SAME QUESTIONS HAUNT YOU, TOO?
HOW IS IT THAT EACH OF US CAME TO HAVE SUCH PHENOMENAL POWERS? WERE WE ALL "KNIGHTS OF THE ATOMIC ROUND TABLE" BY SHEER ACCIDENT?
AND... GOD HELP ME FOR THINKING THIS...
... WAS I THE ONLY ONE WHO FELT THAT REBEL... DIDN'T BELONG?
WHILE I CONCUR THIS IS HARDLY THE PLACE FOR SUCH SPECULATION --
-- I THINK WE EACH SHARED AN UNEASINESS IN CONNER O'REILLY'S PRESENCE.
IN FACT, HOW ALL OUR LIVES ARE INTERMINGLED...
... IT MUST BE FOR SOME GREATER PURPOSE!
IT IS.

AND YOU WILL BE GIVEN ONE LAST CHANCE TO FIGHT FOR IT.
THE DEVOURER OF WORLDS APPROACHES.
IT IS A TERRIBLE HUNGER HE BRINGS.
HAVE YOU COME TO JOIN US?
WILL YOU AID US IN STOPPING WHAT YOU HAVE FORETOLD?
I HAVE... DONE WHAT I COULD DO.
MY SOLE TASK NOW IS TO WATCH.
BUT, THERE WILL BE OTHERS...
...WHEN HEROES REUNITE!

BALD MAN IS RIGHT!
NOTHING CAN STOP HULK.
NOW, HULK HAS FRIENDS.
GUESS THAT MEANS US, Huh, DOC?
DOC SAMSON. SHE HULK. THE HULK.
THE HULKBUSTERS!
IN 30 DAYS: FOUR 40 PAGE BLOCKBUSTERS!
Fantastic Four #12
AVENGERS #12
CAPTAIN AMERICA #12
IRON MAN #12
HEROES REUNITED!

MARVEL COMICS
THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMICS!
OCT #12
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
HEROES REUNITED
PART 3 OF 4
LOEB • BENES • SHOEMAKER • JD
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LET'S TRY THIS AGAIN --
-- FROM THE TOP.

THE STAN LEE CREATIVE WRITERS WORKED AVENUE
MATTERS of the HEART
JEPH LOEB & JIM LEE Plot
JEPH LOEB Script
ED BENES TERRY SHOEMAKER Pencils
MIKE MILLER JD & HOMAGE STUDIOS Inks
WILDSTORM FX Colors RS & COMICRAFT'S ALBERT DESCHESNE Letters
RUBEN DIAZ Editor ROB HARRAS Editor in Chief
Special Thanks to SCOTT LOBDELL Inspiration
THE BAXTER BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY. HEADQUARTERS OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST HEROES... THE Fantastic Four
WHATEVER IT IS THAT TURNED ALLA YOUS GREEN, I SURE AS HOPE IT AIN'T CATCHIN'.
LOOK WHO'S TALKING, BLUE EYES.
BEING GREEN IS A LOT EASIER THAN I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO BE.
REED -- GIVEN THE AMOUNT OF GAMMA RADIATION THEY'VE BEEN EXPOSED TO -- HOW CAN THEY POSSIBLY BE HEALTHY?
IT IS RATHER ODD THAT ALL THREE OF YOU -- BRUCE, LEONARD AND JENNIFER -- SEEM TO HAVE TRANSFORMED WITH RELATIVELY LITTLE DISCOMFORT TO YOUR BODIES.
WHICH FURTHERS THE MYSTERY THAT WE'RE ALL HAVING THIS FEELING --
-- A SORT OF A "DEJA VU" --
-- THAT WE ARE ALL EXACTLY AS WE SHOULD BE.
BRUCE..?
WHY DOES RUBBER MAN CALL HULK "BRUCE?"
HULK IS HULK!

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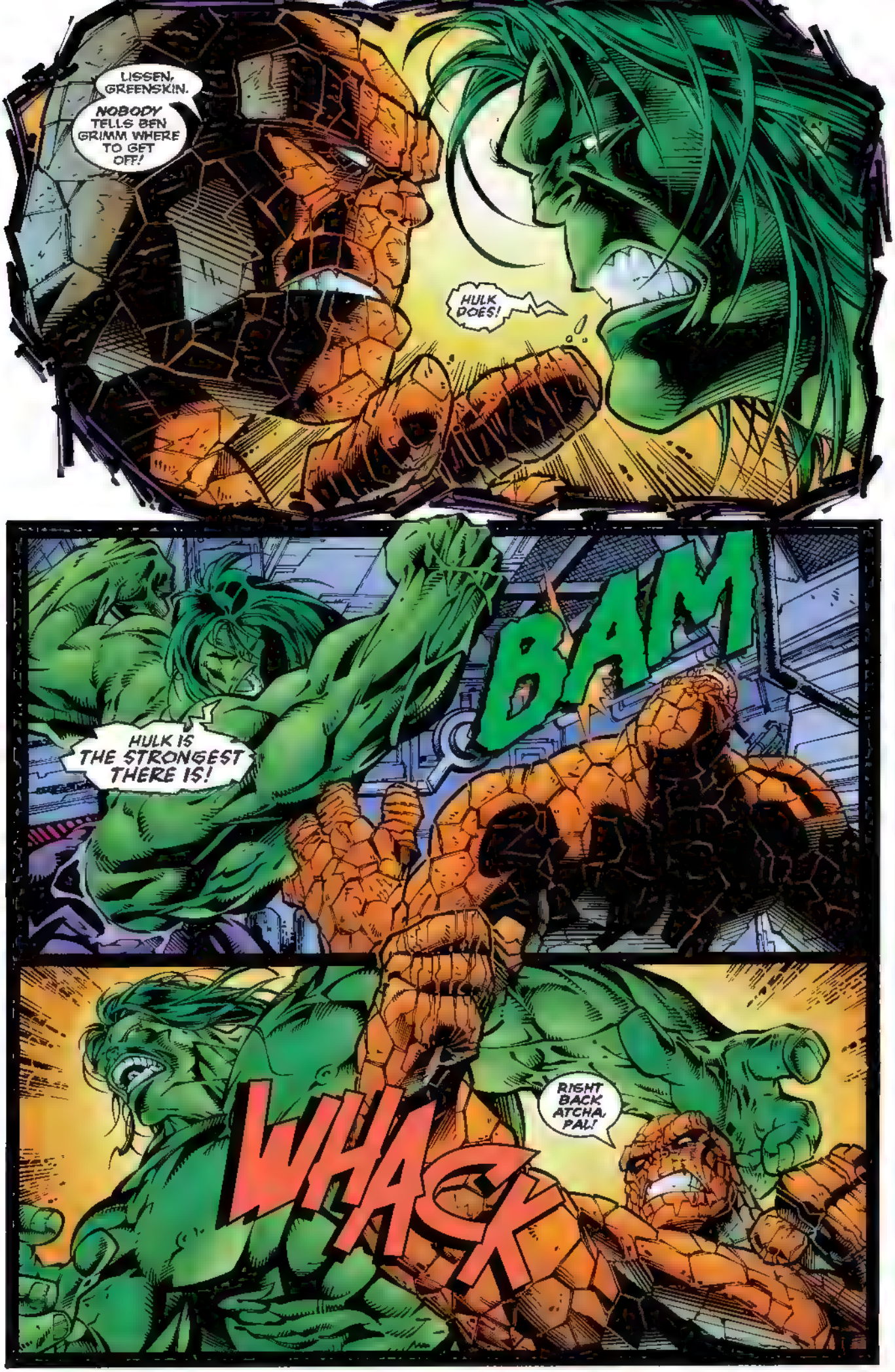
FASCINATING.
WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THE MATHEMATICAL ODDS ARE THAT *EACH* OF US WOULD SOMEHOW ACQUIRE *FANTASTIC POWERS* --
-- OR THAT OUR LIVES WOULD BE SO INTERTWINED LONG AFTER WE GRADUATED COLLEGE --
-- AFFECTING NEARLY *EVERYONE* YOU HAVE COME IN CONTACT WITH?
WANNA JOIN ME FOR A ROOT BEER FLOAT, HANDSOME?
H-HANDSOME..?
THIS SHE-HULK CHICK CAN'T BE FLIRTIN' WITH *A MUG* LIKE ME, CAN SHE?
TOO MUCH TALK.
ROCK MAN LEAVE HULK'S COUSIN ALONE!
SEZ WHO?
UH-OH.


LISSEN, GREENSKIN.
NOBODY TELLS BEN GRIMM WHERE TO GET OFF!
HULK DOES!
BAM
HULK IS THE STRONGEST THERE IS!
WHACK
RIGHT BACK ATCHA, PAL!

FIVE BUCKS ON BEN.
IF YOU'RE WILLING TO *LOSE TEN*, YOU'VE GOT A BET.
DONE.
WARNING: ATMOSPHERIC BREACH!
NOW, WHAT?!
I HAVE BEEN HALF EXPECTING THIS. MONITORING THE OZONE LAYER --
HULK WILL MAKE ROCK MAN SIT DOWN.
IN YER DREAMS, BUD.
KRASH

BENJAMIN J. GRIMM!
HULK IS TRAPPED.
AND YOU'RE BOTH GOING TO STAY THAT WAY UNTIL YOU LEARN TO BEHAVE.
AH, SUZ, WE WUZ JUS' HAVIN' SOME FUN WHILE ALL THE EGGHEADS WUZ JAWIN'.
SISTERS...
TALK ABOUT YOUR WET B-ANKET...
REED. THAT FLYING FORMATION. IT'S AS IF THEY WERE PROTECTING --
THEIR COSMIC ENERGY READINGS BEAR NO COMPARISON TO ANYTHING WE HAVE ON RECORD.

I HAVE THE SAME THOUGHT, TONY.
COMPUTER. MAGNIFY QUADRANT AREA *BEHIND* THE ALIEN LIFEFORMS.
MAGNIFICATION 9.872
A SPACE SHIP!
NOT JUST *ANY* SHIP.
SOMEWHERE IN THE FOG THAT WAS *MY TIME TRAVEL* EXPERIENCE WITH VICTOR VON DOOM...*
...I KNOW THAT SHIP PLAYS A PART...
A PROPOSAL OF SORTS. THE FANTASTIC FOUR WILL MAKE FIRST CONTACT.
TONY, WILL YOU AND THE HULKBUSTERS ACT AS OUR SECONDS?
ANYTHING YA WANT, STRETCHO. LONG AS YA DON'T *TALK* US TA DEATH.
YOU TAKE THE POINT THEN REED.

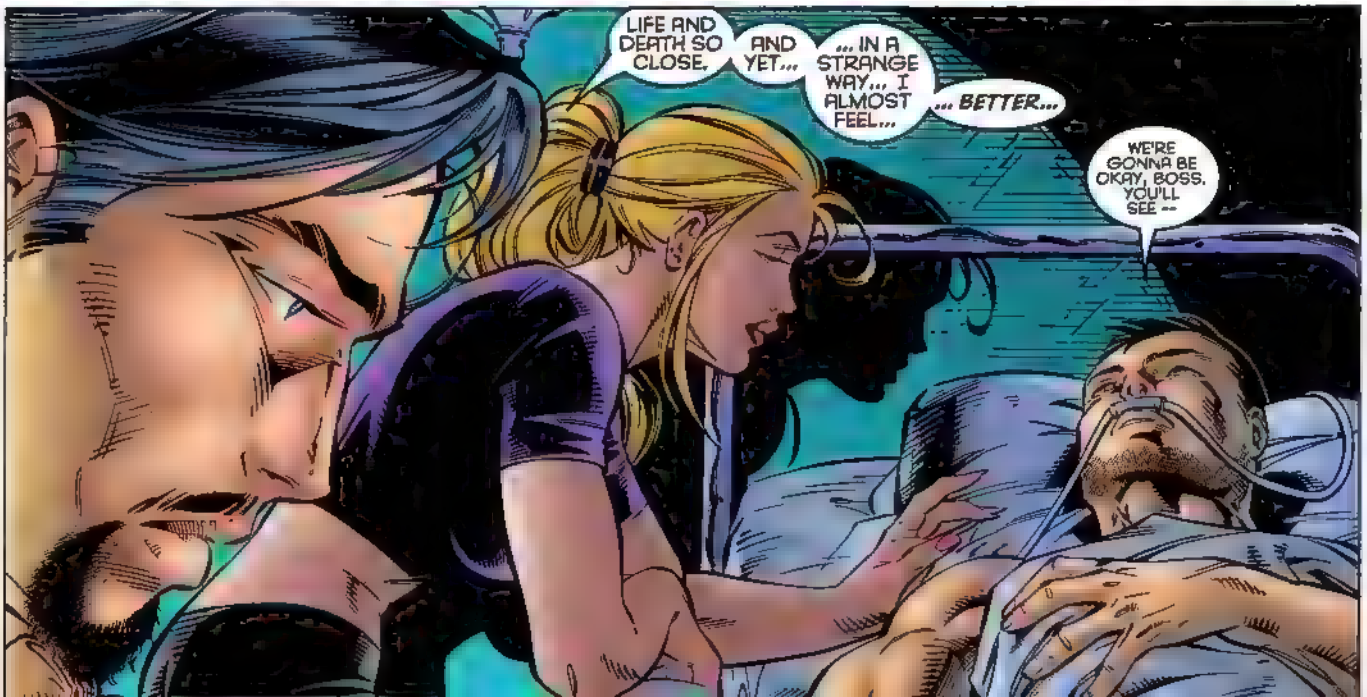
I... Um... AM A LITTLE Um...
... GREEN AT TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS...
... BUT AS PEPPER WOULD SAY "YOU'RE NEVER TOO YOUNG TO LEARN, BOSS."
PEPPER...?
WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU ALL, IN MY LESS THAN ELOQUENT WAY, IS THAT SINCE THE GAMMA BOMB WAS BUILT BY STARK INDUSTRIES --
-- I WON'T REST UNTIL I FIND A CURE FOR ALL OF YOU.
TONY.
AS YOUR THERAPIST AND YOUR FRIEND,
IF THIS IS THE PRICE TO SEE THE CHANGE THAT'S COME OVER YOU IN THE PAST YEAR --
-- FROM A HEARTLESS S.O.B. TO THE MAN I SEE TODAY --
-- WE WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY!

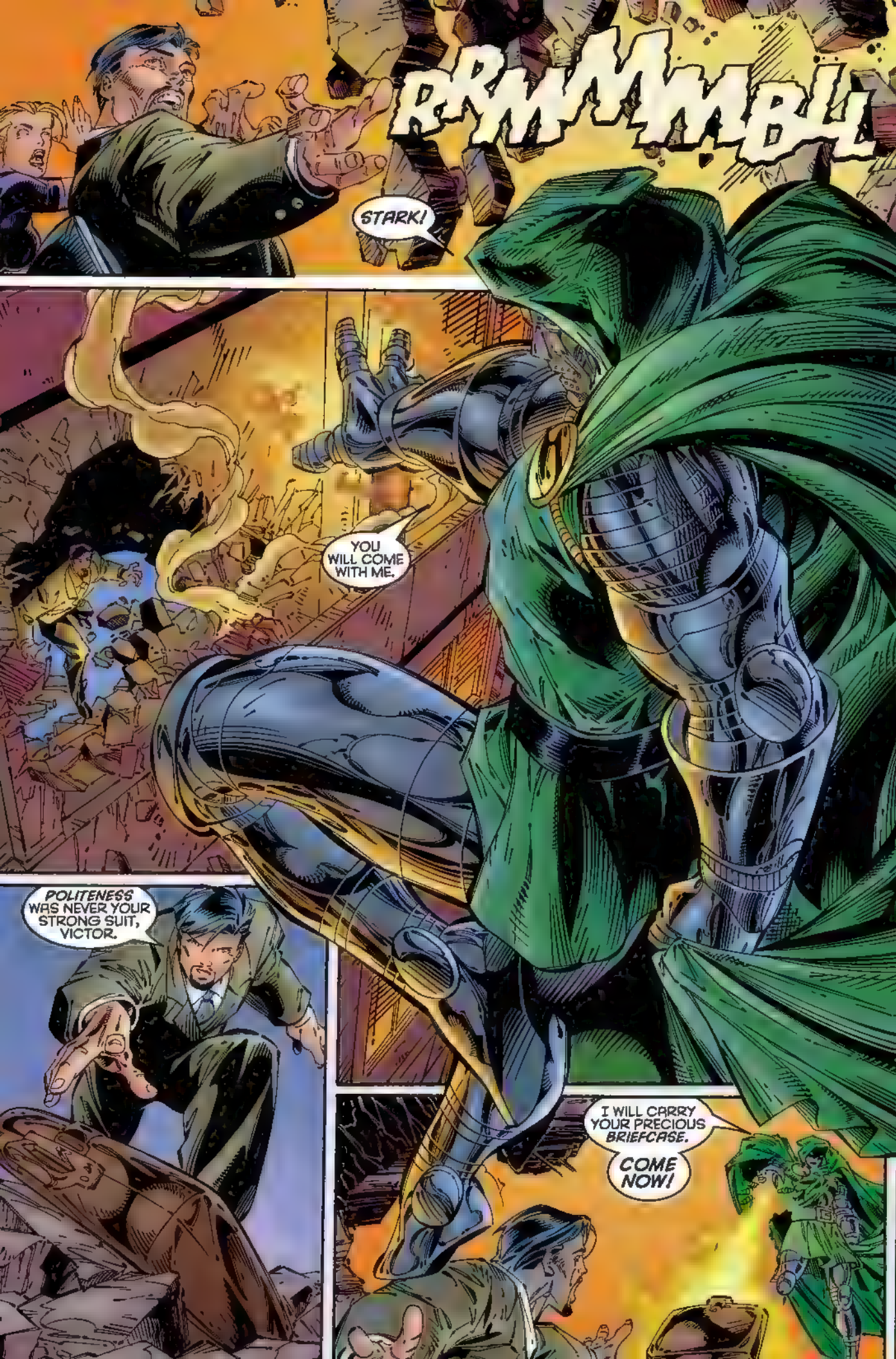
BRUCE... I KNOW SOMEWHERE IN THERE IS THE FRIEND I LOST...
HULK IS NOT LOST. HULK IS HERE.

BEEP BEEP BEEP
BEEN WAITING FOR THIS...
I HOPE I CAN TRUST THE THREE OF YOU NOT TO *WRECK* REED'S LAB --
-- BUT A MATTER HAS COME UP THAT WON'T WAIT.
SURE, TONY.
JUST WHEN WE ALL THOUGHT HE'D HAD A CHANGE OF HEART --
"THERE GOES TONY STARK BACK INTO HIS OWN LITTLE WORLD..."
ZIFF MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
TIME TO FACE THE MUSIC... NO MATTER HOW *BAD* IT IS...

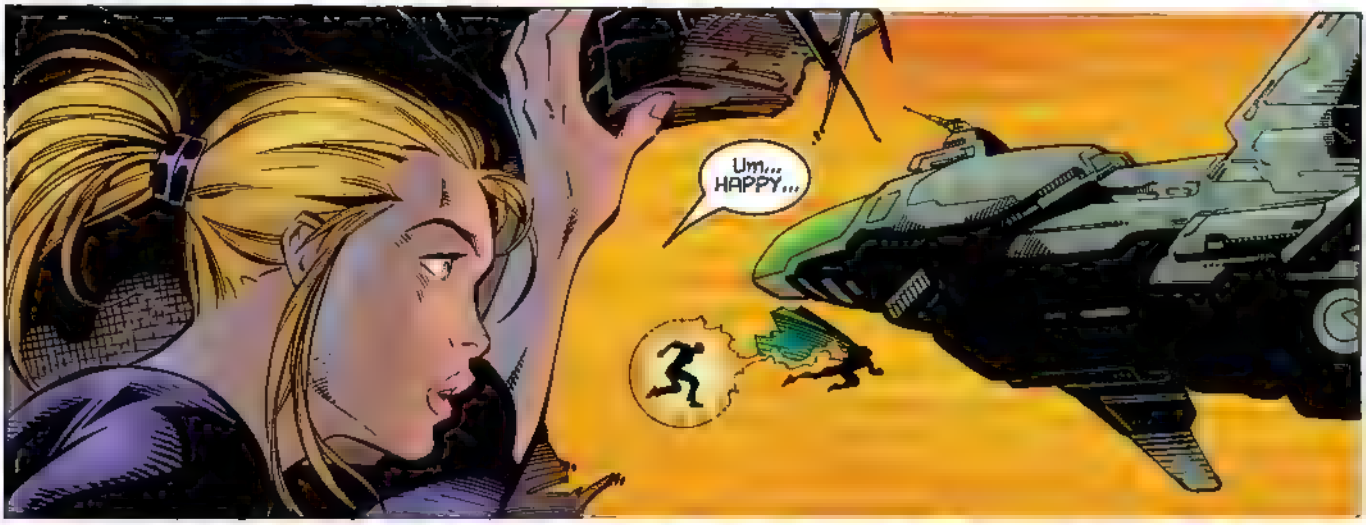
PEPPER.
HI, BOSS. GOT MY PAGE, Huh?
HOW... HOW IS HE?
NOT QUITE THE SAME OLD HAPPY HOGAN, BUT I'LL KEEP HIM.
TALKIN' ABOUT ME LIKE I'M NOT HERE, HEY, MISTER STARK?
HAPPY GOT BLASTED IN ISSUE #7 -- Dr. Rubo.

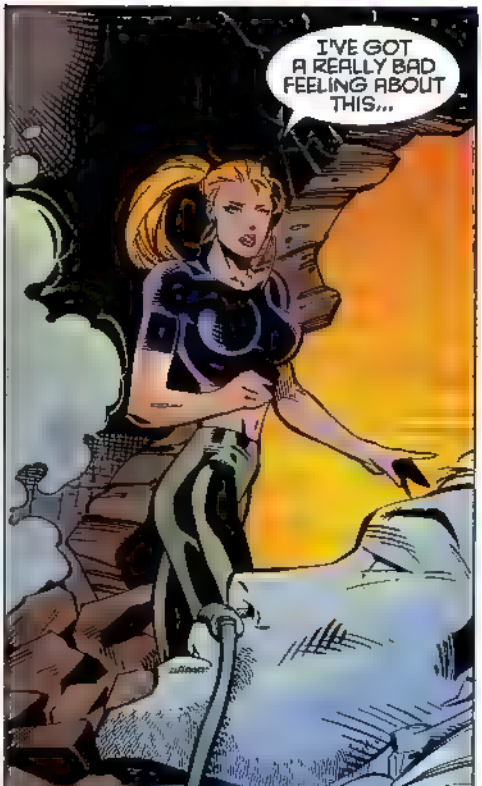
IS IT ME --
-- OR HAS THIS BEEN THE YEAR FROM HELL?
I'D LIKE TO SAY IT'S YOU --
-- BUT WE'VE ALL HAD IT PRETTY ROUGH..

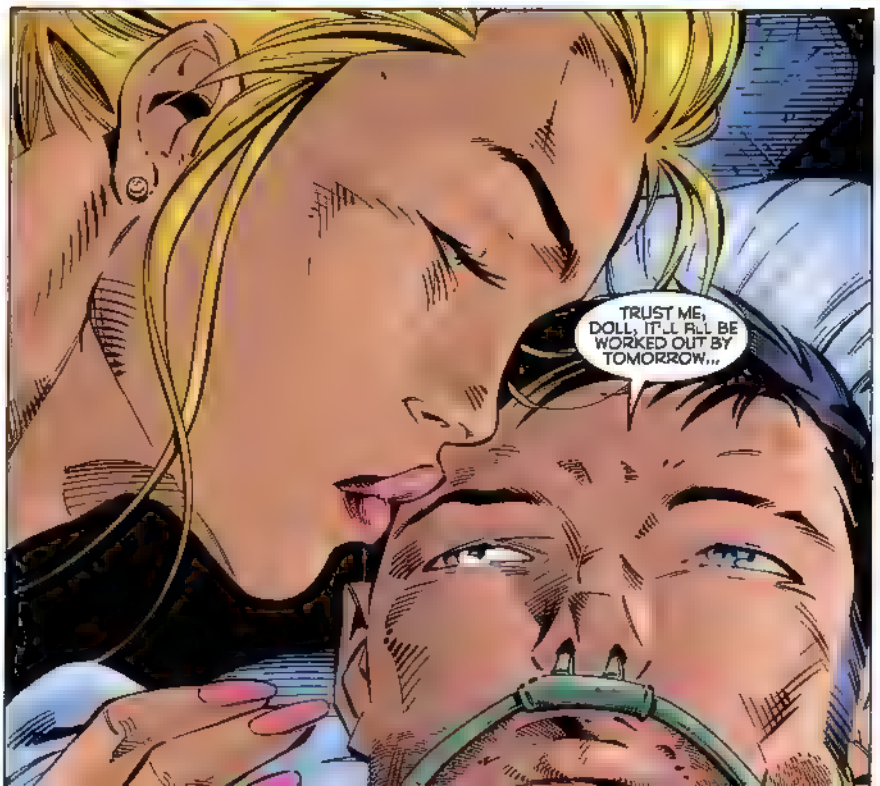

LIFE AND DEATH SO CLOSE.
AND YET...
... IN A STRANGE WAY... I ALMOST FEEL...
... BETTER...
WE'RE GONNA BE OKAY, BOSS. YOU'LL SEE --


RRUMMBL
STARK!
YOU WILL COME WITH ME.
POLITENESS WAS NEVER YOUR STRONG SUIT, VICTOR.
I WILL CARRY YOUR PRECIOUS BRIEFCASE.
COME NOW!

HEED MY WORDS, STARK.
IF DOOM HAD ANY *OTHER* CHOICE, WOULD HE NOT CHOOSE *ANOTHER* TO BE HIS ALLY?
ALLY..?!

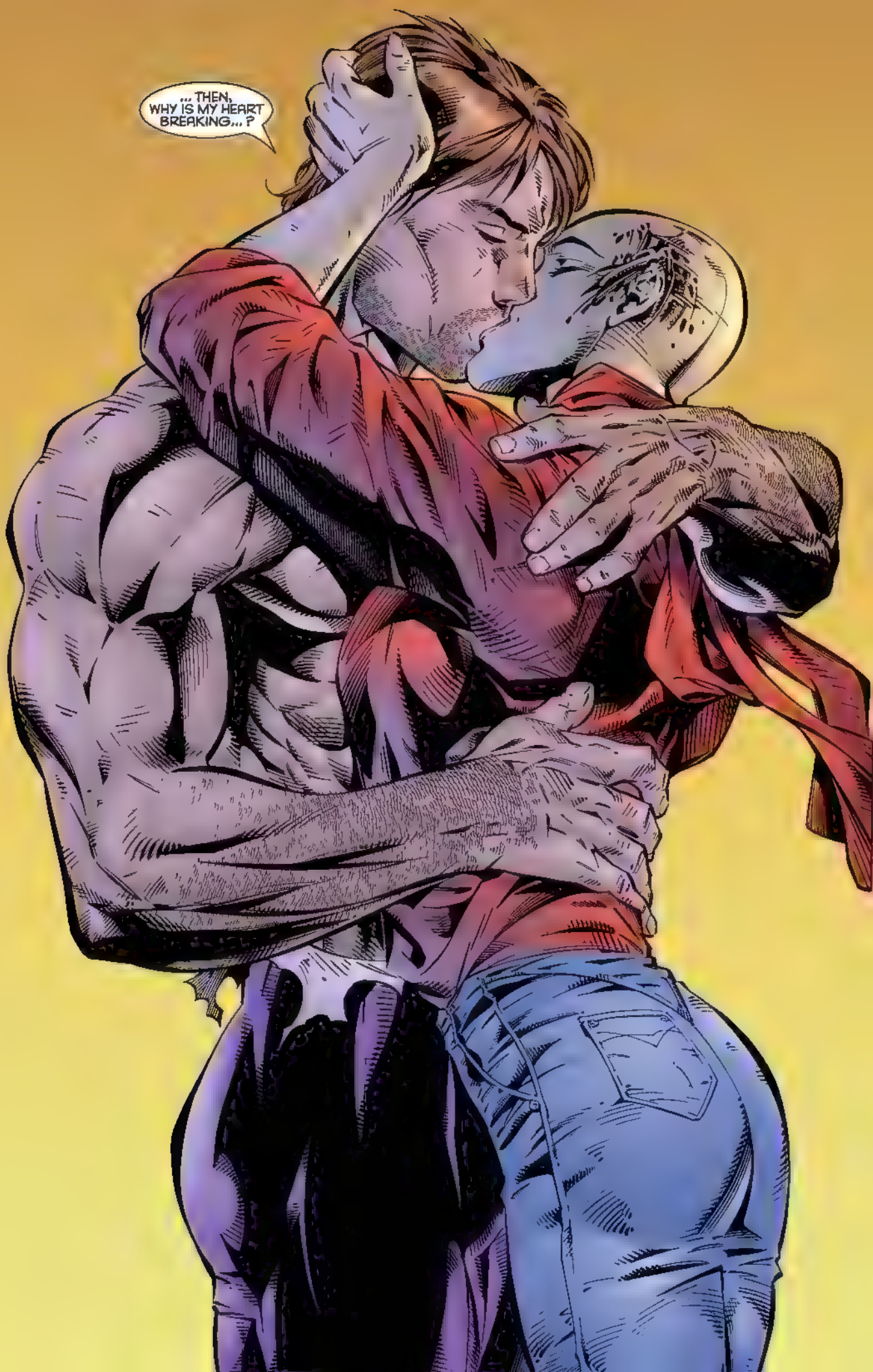

Um... HAPPY...

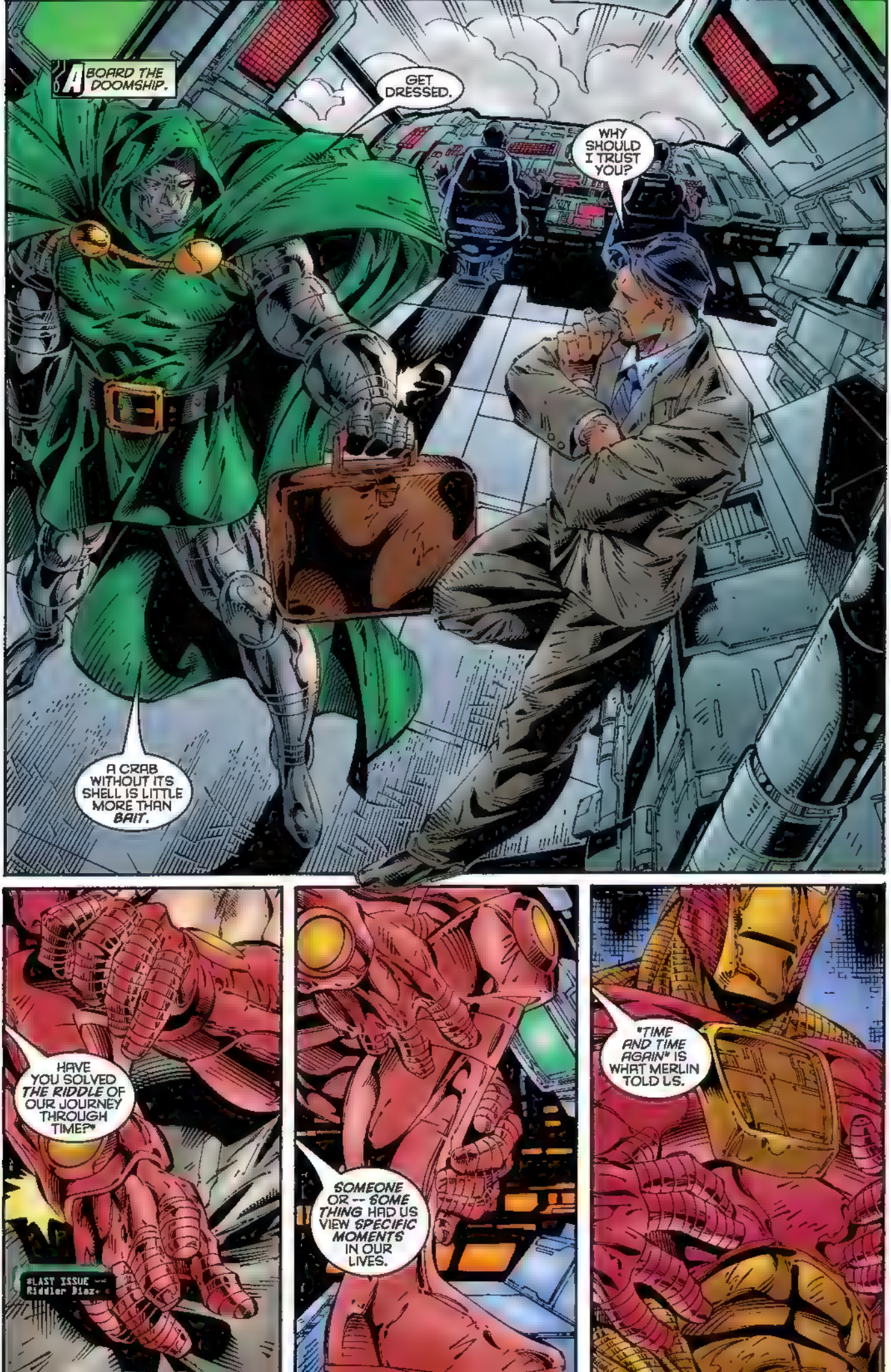

I'VE GOT A REALLY BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS...

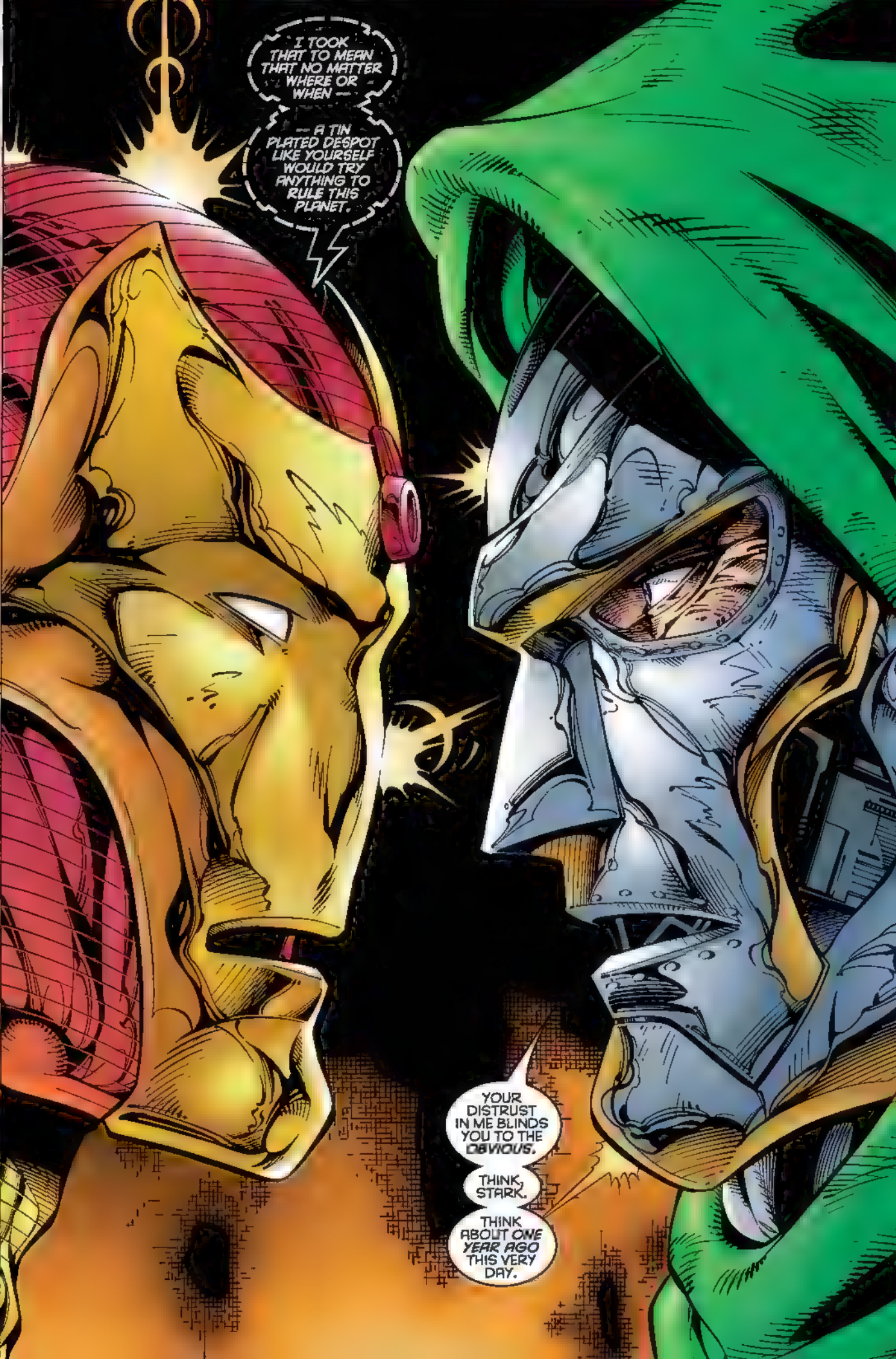

TRUST ME, DOLL, IT'LL ALL BE WORKED OUT BY TOMORROW...

THE BAXTER BUILDING.
THE F.F. SEEM TO BE HOLDING THEIR OWN. DO YOU THINK WE'LL BE GOING IN, JENNIFER?
I THINK THAT'S PRETTY MUCH REED'S CALL, LEONARD.
BAH! HULK DOES NOT WANT TO WATCH T.V.
BRUCE...?
WHO...?
IT'S ME.
I HAD TO COME TO SEE YOU.
PLEASE DON'T BE ANGRY.
WHOA, LADY, HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE?

GETTING THROUGH SECURITY SYSTEMS IS SOMETHING I'VE BEEN DOING ALL MY LIFE.
WHAT LIFE I'VE GOT LEFT, THAT IS...
LIZ...?
I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CAN UNDERSTAND ABOUT ALL THIS, BRUCE.
BUT... THE GAMMA RADIATION WE WERE EXPOSED TO...
...IT TURNED YOU INTO THIS... HULK... BUT, I WASN'T SO LUCKY.
LUCKY...?
ALWAYS REMEMBER... HULK IS STRONGEST THERE IS.
IF HULK IS SO STRONG...


... THEN, WHY IS MY HEART BREAKING... ?

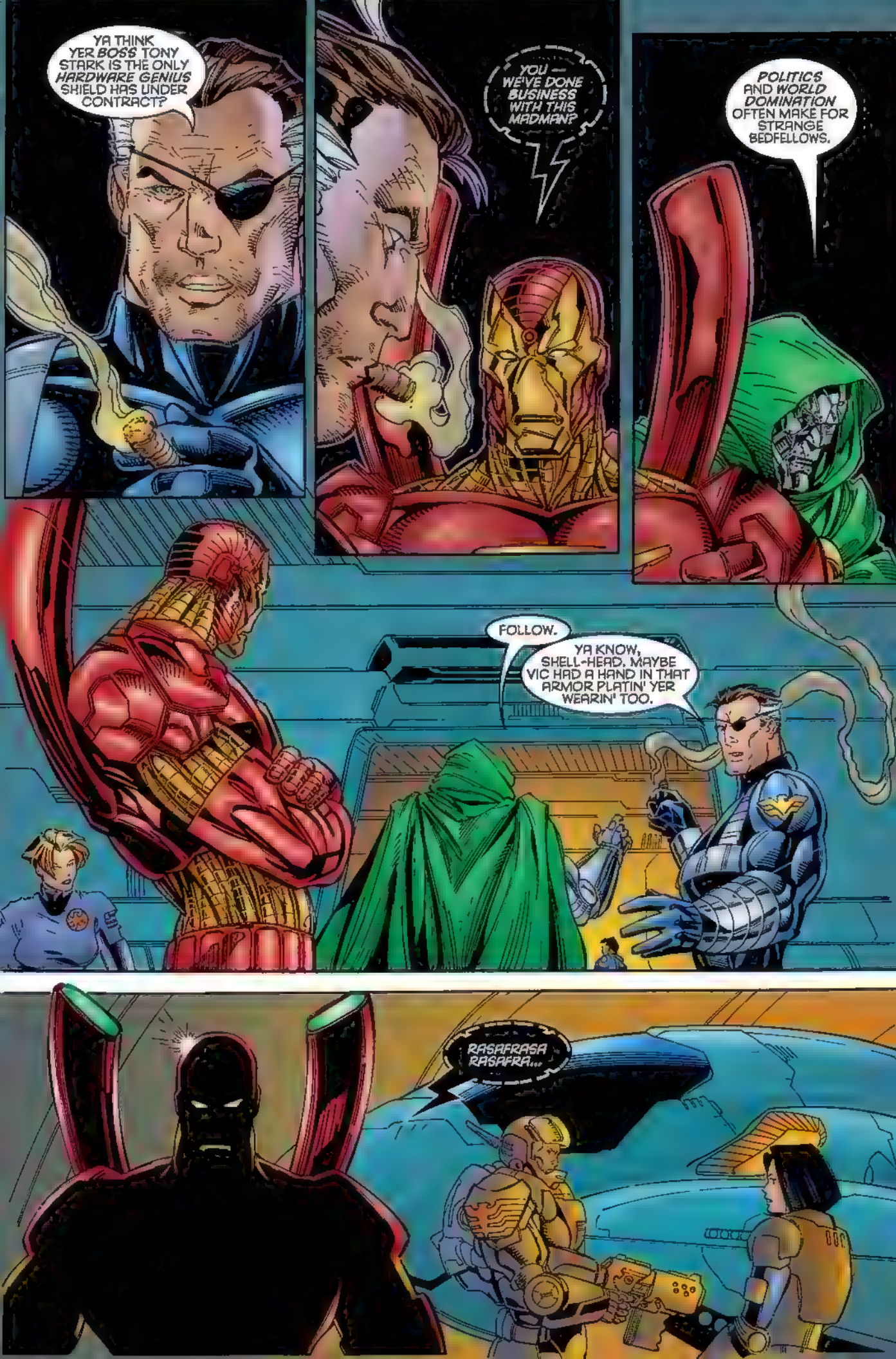

ABOARD THE DOOMSHIP.
GET DRESSED.
WHY SHOULD I TRUST YOU?
A CRAB WITHOUT ITS SHELL IS LITTLE MORE THAN BAIT.
HAVE YOU SOLVED THE RIDDLE OF OUR JOURNEY THROUGH TIME?"
#LAST ISSUE -- Riddler Diaz+
SOMEONE OR -- SOME THING HAD US VIEW SPECIFIC MOMENTS IN OUR LIVES.
"TIME AND TIME AGAIN" IS WHAT MERLIN TOLD US.


I TOOK THAT TO MEAN THAT NO MATTER WHERE OR WHEN —
— A TIN PLATED DESPOT LIKE YOURSELF WOULD TRY ANYTHING TO RULE THIS PLANET.
YOUR DISTRUST IN ME BLINDS YOU TO THE OBVIOUS.
THINK, STARK.
THINK ABOUT ONE YEAR AGO THIS VERY DAY.

"WE WERE IN ANOTHER *PLACE*, ANOTHER WHEN.
"A *MUTANT* KNOWN AS *ONSLAUGHT* SOUGHT TO DESTROY THE WORLD *WE* KNEW AS EARTH."
*See ONSLAUGHT: MARVEL UNIVERSE -- Caught in the past Diaz.
"YOU ACTED *RASHLY* -- IMPULSIVELY!
"AT A TIME OF *HEROES*, YOU BROUGHT *ME* DIRECTLY INTO THE CONFLICT.
"WHY, TONY STARK?
"WHY BRING A "*TIN PLATED DESPOT*" ALONG ON YOUR JOURNEY?"

"ANOTHER PLACE... ANOTHER WHEN...?"
EVEN DOOM MUST REALIZE AT SOME POINT THAT A PUPPET MASTER CAN HAVE HIS OWN STRINGS PULLED.
THAT DAY...
...ONE YEAR AGO...
...WAS ABOUT THIS ONE.
AFTER -- ALL YOU'VE DONE TO DESTROY EVERYTHING I HAVE --
-- EVERY ONE I'VE EVER LOVED --
--YOU NOW WANT ME TO ACCEPT ANYTHING YOU HAVE TO SAY?
YOU ACTUALLY WANT ME TO TRUST YOU?!
NAW. IT'S WORSE.
YA GOTTA TRUST THE BOTH O' US.

THE S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER. AMERICA'S ANSWER TO HAVING AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER THAT FLIES.
TONY STARK DESIGNED AND BUILT IT.
BUT ONLY ONE MAN RUNS THIS TUB.
FURY?!
SKRULLIAN BATTLE CRUISER CLEARED FOR LANDING.
FURY, YOU'VE BREACHED ABOUT TEN LEVELS OF NATIONAL SECURITY BY BRINGING DOOM ABOARD THIS HELICARRIER.
IS THAT SO?


YA THINK YER BOSS TONY STARK IS THE ONLY HARDWARE GENIUS SHIELD HAS UNDER CONTRACT?
YOU — WE'VE DONE BUSINESS WITH THIS MADMAN?
POLITICS AND WORLD DOMINATION OFTEN MAKE FOR STRANGE BEDFELLOWS.
FOLLOW.
YA KNOW, SHELL-HEAD, MAYBE VIC HAD A HAND IN THAT ARMOR PLATIN' YER WEARIN' TOO.
RASAFRASA RASAFRA...

FURY, WHAT IS THIST WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT IT WOULD HAVE YOU ALLIED WITH DOOM — — MUCH LESS ME.
EVERY-THING WE GOT HERE IS ON A NEED TA KNOW BASIS... ... AND NOW YA NEED TA KNOW.
VERILY, SH'N NG ONE, IT DOST MINE EYES GOOD TO SEE YOUR PROUD SE.F AMONGST THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST HEROES.
THE SCARLET WITCH, THE VISION, CAPTAIN AMERICA, HAWKEYE, THE WASP, ANT MAN.
THE GOD OF THUNDER BIDS YOU WELCOME!
THE AVENGERS?!
HEY, DON'T FORGET ABOUT US HULKBUSTERS!

I BROUGHT YA ALL TOGETHER, CAUSE --
-- I REGRET TO INFORM ALL O' YA.
THAT AS OF 16:20 HOURS TODAY,
THE FANTASTIC FOUR WERE KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY.
NO!
RICHARDS... DEAD?
TWICE BEFORE I'VE SEEN THE DAY GO TO THE DEVOURER OF WORLDS.*
BUT, NEVER IN MY TIME JOURNEYS HAD THE FANTASTIC FOUR BEEN TAKEN FROM THE FIELD THIS SOON.
AM I DESTINED TO FAILURE EVEN BEFORE I HAVE BEGUN?!
*SEE F.F. #12 & AVENGERS #12 -- Time Keeper Diaz.

THE THING WUZ THE FIRST TO FALL. HE WENT UP 'GAINST SOME POND SCUM NAMED TERRAX.
THE TORCH GAVE HIS ALL 'GAINST THIS HERE FIRELORD.
RICHARDS... AT THE HANDS OF PLASMA.
TILL ALL THAT WUZ LEFT WAS THE INVISIBLE GIRL... er... WOMAN...
...AND SOME CREEP CALLED AIR-WALKER.

"THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THIS BLASTED MUDBALL.
"AND THAT MAKES 'EM *HEROES* IN *MY* BOOK."

NOW, I GOT A JOB FER YA.
I KNOW WE NEVER SAW EYE TO EYE ABOUT MUCH --
-- BUT REMEMBER, THERE WOULDN'T BE ANY AVENGERS AT ALL IF IT WEREN'T FER ME.*
SO, CAN YA LET BYGONES BE BYGONES?
I THINK I SPEAK FOR ALL OF US, WHEN I SAY THAT THIS IS THE DAY WE EARN OUR NAME.
*SEE AVENGERS NR #1 -- RUMOR.
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
ALL RIGHT THEN.
YER GONNA WORK IN TEAMS.
AND I DON'T WANT ANY FLAP ABOUT IT.

"THOR AND SHE HULK. YA'LL BE GOIN' TO ATTILAN TO TACKLE TERRAX.
"CAP, YOU TAKE DOC SAMSON AND HAWKEYE.
"THE WITCH HAS THE WASP AND THE VISION ON HER TEAM. ANTARCTICA'S THE PLACE; PLASMA'S THE TARGET.
"THE SUB-MARINER IS ALREADY INTO IT ON MONSTER ISLAND WITH FIRELORD."
"THE REST OF YA GOT IT EASY. JUST FIGURE OUT HOW TA STOP WHAT'S COMIN' FROM THAT SPACE SHIP."

ANTARCTICA.
RESISTANCE IS FUTILE.
YOU DON'T MIND IF WE SEE IT ANOTHER WAY, PLASMA?
NOW, WASP!
I PREFER MY VILLAINS "UP WITH A TWIST", BUT "ON ICE" WILL DO, WANDA.
LET'S JUST HOPE THE OTHERS FAIR AS WELL, JAN.

MONSTER ISLAND.
NEVER HAS THE WILL OF GALACTUS BEEN DENIED!
RAGING... HEAT...
BAM
JUST AN EDUCATED GUESS, BUT I AM THINKING THAT THE PRINCE OF THE SEVEN SEAS DOESN'T CARE FOR THAT.
MOCK ME -- AND YOU MOCK HE WHO DEVOURERS WORLDS!
ONE SHOT.
"FOR THE FOUR."

ATTILAN.
THE MORE THAT ARE SENT AGAINST ME, THE MORE WILL DIE!
I SAY THEE "NAY."
SNAK
BOFF
MISTER. YOU'RE GOING DOWN.

REMEMBER THIS DAY, TERRAX --
--IT HATH BEEN YOUR LAST!

ABOARD THE HELICARRIER.
AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS THIS FEELING THAT WE'RE BACK IN COLLEGE --
-- CRAMMING FOR A FINAL?
"THE KNIGHTS OF THE ATOMIC ROUND TABLE."
NOT WITHOUT REED.
WE COULD NEVER HAVE DONE ANY OF THIS WITHOUT REED.
... NO.
YOUR FAITH IN RICHARDS WAS ALWAYS MISPLACED, STARK.
EVEN YOU HAVE TO AGREE WITH THAT SENTIMENT, VICTOR.
I...
WE HAVE DONE WHAT HE COULD NOT. THIS WEAPON --
WHARDUM
WARNING! HULL BREACH! STANDARD ENGINES DOWN!
YA TEST TUBE MONKEYS HAD BETTER BE READY, 'CAUSE --
--WE GOT OURSELVES ONE HECKUVA SITUATION OUT THERE!

ZZRAK
I HUNGER!
"CALLS HIMSELF *GALACTUS*, ACCORDIN' TO DOOM, HE CAN ACTUALLY *EAT* THIS PLANET.
"AND WE AIN'T ABOUT TO LET 'IM DO THAT, RIGHT?!"

STARK. THIS IS THE CRITICAL MOMENT.
THE *IMPROVEMENTS* WE'VE MADE IN THIS "*ULIMATE NULLIFIER*" MAY YET WIN THIS DAY.
FIRE IT AT POINT BLANK RANGE AT GALACTUS... IF YOU SURVIVE.
VICTOR. WHEN WE SURVIVE, IS THERE A CHANCE YOU'LL SEE THE ERROR OF YOUR LIFE AND --
"TIME AND TIME AGAIN", STARK --
TIN MEN NEED HELP --
-- AND HULK IS STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!
LET'S DO IT!

The world has no room for cowards. we must all be ready to toil, to suffer, to die.
And yours is not less noble because no drum beats before you when you go out into your daily battlefields.
And no crowds shout about your coming when you return from your daily victory or defeat.
-- Robert Louis Stevenson.

FAILED.
TIME AND TIME AGAIN.
THE WORLD'S GOIN' TO HELL IN A HAND BASKET AND WHAT ARE YA DOIN', DOOM?!
WHEN YOU SEE ME *AGAIN*, FURY, YOU WILL HAVE NO MEMORY OF TODAY.
AND WITH THE INFORMATION I HAVE *DOWNLOADED* FROM THE S.H.I.E.L.D. FILES --
-- THERE MAY JUST BE A *TOMORROW*.
FUNNY WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT KEEPIN' YOUR FRIENDS CLOSE AND YER ENEMIES CLOSER, VIC.
BLAM BLAM BLAM
ZZZZRAKKK!
CHRONOMETER SET FOR *TWENTY-FOUR HOURS IN THE PAST*...
NEXT: THE STUNNING CONCLUSION TO HEROES REUNITED IN CAPTAIN AMERICA #12

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